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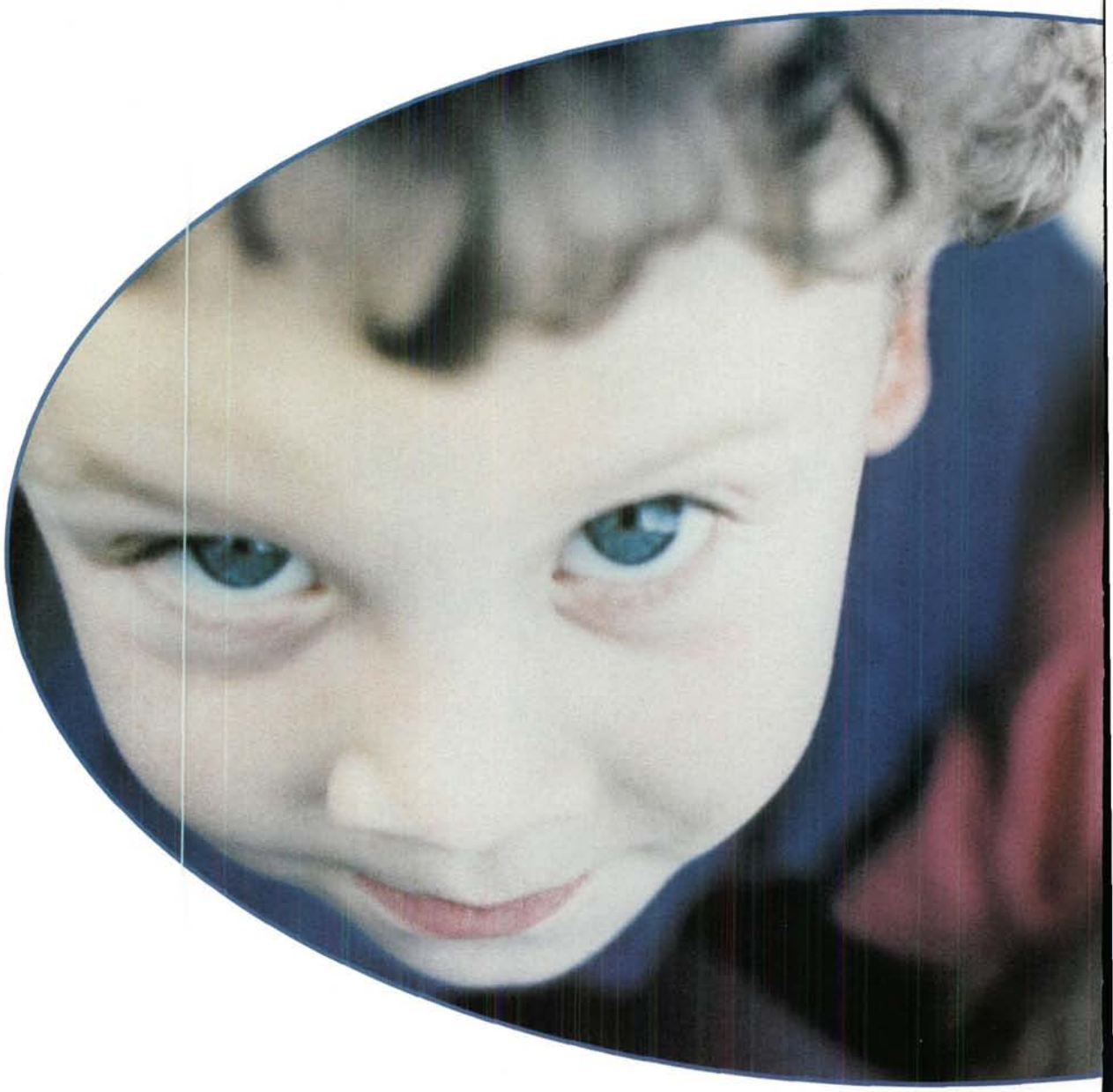

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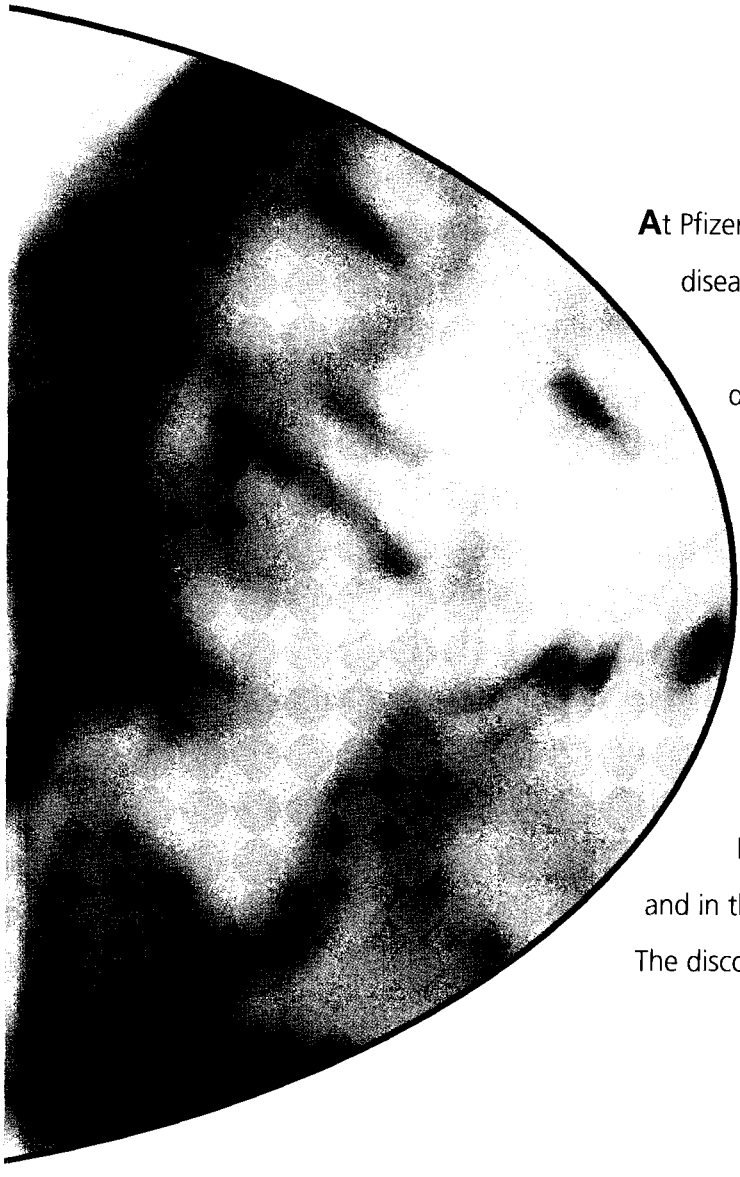

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■ LETTERS ■

THE CATHOLIC VOTE

I hardly think that Steven Wagner, a paid propagandist for the Republican party, is an objective, credible source for interpreting the importance of Catholics in American politics ("The Catholic Factor" by Kate O'Beirne, Aug. 28). For cultural, economic, and historical reasons, Catholics may be reluctant to flock to the banner of a Bush-Cheney ticket.

Survey data from an array of sources indicate that Catholic voters are committed to social justice, favor a preferential option for the poor and disadvantaged, and support peaceful solutions to international crises. They are far more likely to support an increased minimum wage, a comprehensive health-care policy, and targeted tax relief for middle-income and working families. In addition, a recent study revealed that Democratic members of Congress supported the official positions of the U.S. Catholic Conference 76 percent of the time during the 104th and 105th sessions of Congress, while Republican support was only 18 percent.

Albert J. Menendez
Gaithersburg, Md.

WISE MEN (STILL) WANTED

Michael Knox Beran ("No More Wise Men," Aug. 28) makes cogent points in support of his contention that America today has "less need for [the] magnificent virtue [that George] Washington possessed." To the extent that this is limited to "national leaders thoroughly absorbed in the 'tradition of political idealism and public consciousness,'" Beran might be right. But some of his arguments may actually be used *against* his call for a "brand new world." "Clinton's Law" *did* overthrow the Constitution, there *will* always be "plenty of people who simply prefer the excitement of politics" to anything resembling honor, and wisdom *is* far more abundant in virtuous people than in focus groups. But it wasn't Clinton's "peccadillo" that overthrew the Constitution; it was his manipulation of a large segment of spineless Bobos, his twists of the English language, his legalistic machinations, and his abuse of power that violated the spirit, and therefore the fundamental meaning, of the Constitution.

"Nobler ends and higher purposes" require a discerning look beyond focus groups. At the founding of the Republic, politicians didn't need focus groups to hold to truths of equality and democracy: They were self-evident. They still are—to the "Washingtons and Hamiltons, Brutuses and Catos, with their high, severe notions of honor and virtue." Such "wise men" may be rare in public office, but they are no less desirable.

John E. Covell
Brunswick, Ga.

HER OTHER HALF

One thing strikes me as odd about the Sacajawea coin ("Hello, Sacajawea" by Richard Brookhiser, Aug. 28): Where's her husband? If I remember my history correctly, she and her husband, a French trapper, worked as a team to guide Lewis and Clark. Yet you never hear about him, and people get the idea that she was a single mother who managed to survive by herself in the wilderness. And the fact that the family was Catholic? That's about as politically correct as the fact that the historical Pocahontas was an enthusiastic convert to Anglicanism.

Don Schenk
Allentown, Pa.

MORE THAN JUST A KISS

John O'Sullivan's "Kissing Up" (Sept. 15) reminded me of a Richard Weaver quote: "The thing that needs to be censored is not the length of the kisses but the egotistic, selfish, and self-flaunting hero."

Martin Vaala
St. Louis Park, Minn.

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It's the face of Stacy Alynn — teacher, part-time comic and writer. For several years she had experienced an overwhelming sense of despondency and felt increasingly unable to cope with the stresses of day-to-day living. Finally, Stacy, like 17 million other Americans each year, was diagnosed with depression. Life had seemed hopeless to Stacy, with nothing but despair ahead. But now, thanks to breakthrough medicines discovered by America's pharmaceutical companies, she's able to enjoy life again and has even fulfilled her ambition to become a full-time writer. Today, new medicines for depression mean millions of people with the illness are now able to see a brighter future ahead. Pharmaceutical company researchers are working hard to discover breakthroughs that will help make many illnesses and diseases a thing of the past and bring more patients new hope for a better tomorrow. So people like Stacy can smile again. And even stand up on-stage and make other people laugh.

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■ FOR THE RECORD ■

■ In *The Hotline*'s latest electoral scoreboard of state-by-state polls, **George W. Bush** leads **Al Gore** in 22 states worth 248 electoral votes, and Gore is on top in nine states worth 168 (270 are needed to win), with Bush showing strength in Michigan and Gore running well in Illinois and Washington State. . . . In seven election forecasts presented by computer modelers at American Political Science Association meeting, all predict Gore victory. . . . Of 103 million Americans expected to vote for president, about 5 million remain undecided, according to Bush and Gore strategists, reports *New York Times*. . . . "No clear favorite" in 19 House races, says *Congressional Quarterly* analysis. . . . Senate Republicans believe no net losses in November would be good outcome, and currently expect 54-seat majority to slip by one or two seats. . . . Of eleven gubernatorial races this fall, six are considered tossups: Delaware, Missouri, Montana, North Carolina, North Dakota, and West Virginia. Republicans currently hold 30–18 lead in governorships.

■ In Arkansas disbarment proceedings, President **Clinton** files papers saying loss of legal license for perjury would be "excessively harsh, impermissibly punitive, and unprecedented in the circumstances of this case." . . . Clinton legal-defense fund receives $950,000 in first half of 2000, but remains $4 million short of paying off bills. . . . Hours after asking **Monica Lewinsky** to become corporate vice president, American Women Presidents, group urging election of woman as president or vice president, withdraws job offer amid backlash. . . . "I come from a place where barbecue is not food, it is a way of life," says Clinton on trip to New York. "It is a philosophy of human nature. I have rarely had any as good as this."

■ Bush proposes three debates with Gore, on prime-time versions of *Meet the Press*, *Larry King Live*, and in St. Louis. . . . FCC commissioner **Michael Powell**, son of **Colin Powell**, is most likely member of family to win Bush cabinet post, says *Washingtonian*. . . . New pro-Bush website: gorewillsayanything.com.

■ In *Wall Street Journal*, **Ira Stoll** reports on **Joseph Lieberman**'s 1970 book *The Scorpion and the Tarantula*, in which Lieberman endorses a historian's view that Cold War "is not fundamentally a case of the wicked against the virtuous. Fundamentally, it is like the case of the scorpion and the tarantula in the bottle, and we may properly feel sorry for both parties, caught as they are, in a situation of irreducible dilemma." Also compares Soviet domination of Eastern Europe to Monroe Doctrine. Lieberman now says book "does not reflect my thinking about foreign policy or our national security today." . . . Connecticut governor **John Rowland** (R.) promises not to appoint self to replace Lieberman if Democrats win in November, says that Rep. **Nancy Johnson** (R.) would "definitely be on the short list," according to *Bristol Press*. . . . Lieberman can drop out of own Senate race until Oct. 27 and have another Democrat run in place; leading candidate for this role is Connecticut attorney general **Richard Blumenthal**.

"But you were born on February 29th, Mr. Pomeroy—you won't be 65 till 2195."

■ As United Mine Workers of America holds off on Gore endorsement, president **Cecil Roberts** says, "We need to hear from Vice President Gore that there is a future for coal miners in the nation's energy policy." . . . United Electrical, Radio and Machine Workers of America throw weight behind **Ralph Nader**. . . . **Charlie Cook**, on CNN: "The only way Al Gore wins this race is if Nader is at 1, 2, 3 percent." . . . Rep. **Rick Lazio** (R.) raises nearly $11 million in seven weeks, to pull within $3 million of **Hillary Clinton** in total campaign cash. . . . **Geraldo Rivera** says he may run for mayor of New York City. . . . **Liz Abzug**, daughter of **Bella**, ponders running for N.Y. lieutenant governor in 2002, reports *Crain's Insider*. . . . Primary-election turnout in 2000 was at second-lowest level in 40 years, according to Committee for the Study of the American Electorate, with frontloaded schedule named the culprit.

■ California's non-Hispanic white population sank to 49.9 percent last year, reports Census Bureau, making it majority-minority state, with Asian and Latino numbers growing by more than one-third since 1990. . . . Fastest-growing state in 1990s was Nevada. . . . Temp workers may join company unions, says National Labor Relations Board. . . . New USDA regulations on meat processors raise beef prices and threaten school-lunch supplies, reports *Washington Post*. . . . IRS rules that parents of kidnapped children can't claim missing kids as deductions after they've been gone for more than one year.

■ Mexican president-elect **Vicente Fox**, on trip to Washington, D.C.: "We may be able to open the borders not just to capital or goods, but also to people." . . . **Elián González** returns to school in Cuba, recites pledge: "Pioneers for Communism, we will be like Che!" . . . France proposes big tax cuts, following Germany's similar move several weeks earlier, and Italy plans to announce reductions in September. . . . **Saddam Hussein** has lymph cancer, reports Arab newspaper in London, and son would control Iraq if father dies. . . . Chinese family-planning officials in village of Caidian drown healthy baby in front of parents.

■ Mayor **Rudy Giuliani**, on *Late Show with David Letterman*: "I have an idea. . . . It could be like *Survivor*. Give [Lazio and Hillary] a credit card. They get off the airplane at LaGuardia Airport, they rent a car, and they both individually have to find their way home by themselves." **NR**

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even if it's the unpopular thing.

rights in the early '60s, *long before*

Like [illegible] I answered the call to lead the NRA. I believe the Second Amendment is worthy of my time and efforts.

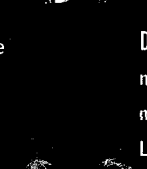
Like the other freedoms in the Bill of Rights — freedoms of speech and religion and the press — the right to bear arms [illegible] all who believe in its core principles of freedom. *Like freedom itself* [illegible]. Our mutual commitment must be to defend the freedom, not to debase its critics.

I hope you'll help the NRA restore gun ownership and the shooting sports to their rightful, respected place in mainstream American life. But *if you won't, please*

NRA.

Charlton Heston

Eddie Eagle



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Did You Know ... "Nobody does more to prevent childhood firearm accidents than the NRA. We've invested $20 million to teach youngsters not to touch guns through our Eddie Eagle GunSafe® Program. Since 1988, 13 million schoolkids have learned its simple lifesaving message about guns: 'Stop, Don't Touch, Leave The Area, Tell An Adult.'"

Wayne LaPierre, NRA Executive Vice President

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THE WEEK

■ Well, *we've* been saying that about *New York Times* reporters for *years*, and no one ever made a fuss.

■ Hey, how about Rick Berke?!

■ Dick Cheney agreed to forfeit the nonvested Halliburton stock options that had been presented to him in his retirement package. Cheney's public-relations tangle, like Newt Gingrich's over his book advance, had reached the point where he had to cut his losses. But Americans should get used to the fact that most of their most prominent politicians have been prosperous, indeed wealthy, men; the historian Edward Pessen wrote a book (*The Log Cabin Myth*) that showed that only three presidents came from the lower middle class, and only one (Andrew Johnson) from poverty. The trouble with myths of this kind is that they are erratically invoked. No one asked Al Gore to give up his Occidental Petroleum stock trust when he ran for vice president.

■ New evidence is confirming two conservative ideas about education: that immersion in English is the best way to teach immigrant children, and that vouchers work. California mandated the former policy in a ballot initiative two years ago, and rising test scores suggest that it is working. And a new study of poor kids awarded private scholarships shows them scoring six points higher on math and reading tests after two years than their peers left behind in public schools. Yet George W. Bush persists in supporting bilingual education, and his support for school choice is tepid. His recent "education week" on the campaign trail spent more time promising federal grants to various interest groups than promoting either idea. Bush likes to call himself "a reformer with results." He should start paying attention to reforms that are actually showing some.

■ Hillary Clinton intervened to prevent Israeli spy Jonathan Pollard from being transferred to a more dangerous wing of the federal prison in which he is serving his life sentence. Desperate to boost her numbers with New York's Jewish voters, the busser of Suha Arafat has finally found a way that is appropriate to her character and her campaign: She does a favor for a convicted spy, which stops short of any substantive help (such as urging his release). Her positions on Middle Eastern politics are rash; her attention to Pollard is grotesque; her actions were weaselly. A threefer.

■ The distribution of medical marijuana in California is forbidden once again, as the Supreme Court voided a lower court's order allowing a cannabis buyers' club in Oakland to operate until the legality of California's Proposition 215 has been determined. Complicated? No more than the politics of medical marijuana. Polls consistently show substantial public support for legal medical pot—results confirmed by referendums in seven states and the District of Columbia. Yet so far only in Hawaii, where the legislature passed and the governor signed a medical-marijuana bill, has the political class heeded popular sentiment. To say nothing of medical necessity, and common sense.

■ When Congress banned federal funding for destructive human-embryo research four years ago, pro-lifers thought they had ensured tax dollars would not pay for this killing of innocent human life, no matter how young or small. They failed to count on the Clinton administration's too-clever lawyers, who have just written guidelines saying federal researchers may not destroy embryos with government money—but that they may make use of embryos destroyed with non-government money. This interpretation perhaps hews, just barely, to the letter of the law. But it treats human life as a commodity that can be made and destroyed in a lab, and makes the government a customer for the leftover parts.

■ The corrections page of the *New York Times* has lately been more reliable reading than the front page. First, the *Times* had to retract a sensationalistic report about the North Pole melting. Then it ran a lengthy correction taking back most of what it had reported in a story about how cities were, in reaction to the Boy Scouts' policy on gays, banning the Scouts from from parks, schools, and other sites (see editorial below). Not so. Our own Melissa Seckora, writing in National Review Online, was the first to blow the journalistic whistle, reporting that the cities cited by the *Times* hadn't banned the Scouts, and also showing that the paper's story was as wrong in its thrust as in its particulars: There is no great public backlash against the Scouts. The organization continues to enjoy high ratings in opinion polls—but there clearly exists a backlash in the newsroom of the *Times*.

■ Remember the HUD pamphlet printed in "English-based Jamaican Creole" and called "Rezedents Rights and Rispansabilities" (and signed by "Sekretary Andrew M. Cuomo fella")? Get ready for more of this. One of President Clinton's latest executive orders says that any institution receiving federal funds must provide services in languages other than English; otherwise, it may be guilty of national-origin discrimination. The order specifically says that "a federally assisted zoo or theater . . . [must] take reasonable steps to provide meaningful opportunities for access" by people who don't speak English. (Somebody should call the government and ask for a copy of the order in Esperanto, just for fun.) Unless Congress challenges this mischievous conflation of

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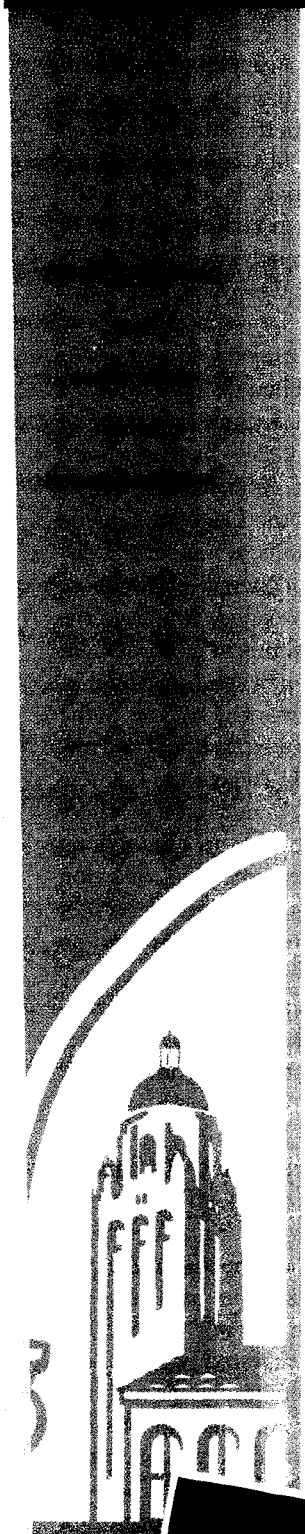
Politics of Convergence in 2000



Paid for by the Hoover Institution, Stanford University.

In the midst of the 2000 presidential election campaign, many voters believe that the nasty, partisan environment in Washington reflects deep policy divisions between Republicans and Democrats. Not true! The state of American politics has changed strikingly since Ronald Reagan left office. **Republicans and Democrats today hold more similar policy views than they have for about twenty years.** A historically familiar pattern of convergence between the parties emerged during the 1990s, following a period of divergence during the Reagan years.

Bill Clinton has won two elections as a "new" Democrat committed to many of Ronald Reagan's governing principles and policies including, for example, less reliance on government and more reliance on individual initiative, the free market, and economic and monetary restraint. For their part, Republicans in 2000 are trying to recapture the White House by combining traditional conservatism with the Democrats' recently successful theme of compassion. Thus, while we watch Republican and Democrats rhetorically slam each other as "dangerous liberals" or "callous right-wingers," the reality is that both parties are presenting themselves to the electorate in almost identical ways: as very caring, compassionate, moderate conservatives.

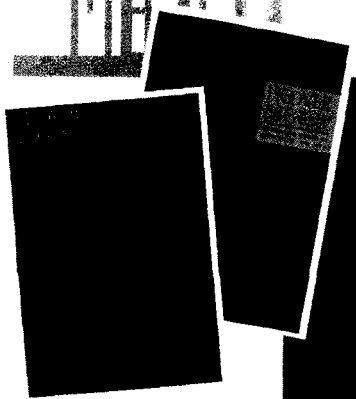
Why has this convergence occurred and how does it fit into the larger history of American and Western democratic politics?

An important part of the answer is that democratic free market electoral competition drives political parties to do what they must in order to win elections. This produces periods of divergence as well as the current pattern of convergence. Indeed, in 1932 and again in 1980, Franklin Roosevelt and later Ronald Reagan led their parties toward new and divergent policies that addressed national crises. Their consequent electoral successes in turn provoked the opposition parties eventually to adopt similar policy views in an effort to become electorally attractive again. That is what Bill Clinton has been doing, so that **convergence is now firmly entrenched in the American political landscape and is likely to stay until a new crisis occurs,** which will then cause one party or the other to lead us into a new era of divergence.

This process is not limited to the United States. In Britain, for example, the Conservative Party is struggling to figure out how to retake power from the enormously popular prime minister Tony Blair and his "new" Labour Party. The problem is that Blair and Labour have taken up the same principles and policies that Mrs. Thatcher's Conservative government championed a decade ago—but added what they describe as a "human face" to those ideas. Now British Conservatives are scrambling to imitate Labour, even going so far as traveling to Texas to learn about George W. Bush's brand of "compassionate conservatism."

In conclusion, we are hearing the usual noise during the 2000 campaign about great differences between the parties as candidates try to energize their supporters and bid for votes. But don't fret, the fabric of American politics is not tearing apart. The differences are not great, and the Republic will be safe whoever wins.

— Gerald A. Dorfman



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language and national-origin status—a linkage that does not exist in civil-rights law—don't be surprised if this policy turns into another Americans with Disabilities Act.

■ Five cities are finalists for the 2008 Olympics: Paris, Toronto, Istanbul, Osaka—and Beijing. So it may well happen, as it did in 1936 (Berlin) and 1980 (Moscow), that the Olympic Games take place in totalitarian surroundings. The Olympic movement has always overlooked such circumstances from a combination of pride and idealism: The Olympics themselves will sanitize their surroundings, because sports pursued for its own sake transcends politics. There is an element of truth in the argument from transcendence, which also applies, even more powerfully, to the arts. But the Olympic movement, like the modern world, fearfully underestimates the capacity of the monster state to control all activities, especially any involving public spectacle—remember East Germany's industrial production of medal winners. The crowds in Beijing would not be randomly selected, nor will they include slave laborers. As always, ignorance (however idealistic) leads to pride, which leads to folly.

■ Whatever you may think of New York mayor Rudy Giuliani's positions on political issues, it's clear the man has no compunctions about speaking plainly when the occasion requires. The current occasion is the visit to the U.N. by that well-known rescuer of distressed children, Fidel Castro. Said Rudy, when asked whether his city would be extending municipal hospitality to *El Jefe:* "Fidel Castro is a murderer." Earlier he had said, "I wouldn't invite him anywhere. What Fidel Castro has done to the Cuban people . . . is an outrage of this century." Meanwhile little Elián González attended first-day ceremonies at his school in Cárdenas, Cuba, reciting his nation's Pledge of Allegiance: "Pioneers for Communism, we will be like Che!" Elián's father, Juan Miguel, reported that: "The boy is very happy." Elián's mother was not available for comment.

■ President Clinton went to Colombia to present that country with the $1.3 billion aid package he and Congress had determined to give it to fight drug kingpins and Marxist guerrillas. There is no great reason for hope: Never in Colombia's history has there been an extended period that was free from political violence and regional rebellion. As a solution to the drug problem, foreign intervention is like curing an alcoholic by locking the liquor cabinet in his house. Somehow the boozer always finds a drink. If domestic pressure won't prompt a rethinking of the war on drugs, maybe a foreign war will.

■ A particularly cold-blooded merchant of death has stepped out of the shadows. Jamal al-Gashey was one of eight Palestinian terrorists who held hostage, tortured, and murdered the Israeli athletes at the 1972 Olympic Games in Munich. Of the other seven, five were killed at the time by the German police, and two more in due course by an avenging Mossad. Protected by Palestinian organizations, al-Gashey lives somewhere in Africa, and there Arthur Cohn, a well-known film producer, went to find him—not to hand him over to the police, but to conduct interviews for his documentary about the Munich atrocity. Already an Academy Award winner, it is to be released on HBO. There have been protests in Israel at clips in the film showing some of the athletes' broken corpses. Far from expressing remorse, al-Gashey remains a proud and boastful killer. Cohn says that "Jamal" (note the familiarity) was crucial to the film as "our guarantor of even-handedness." One can never have too much evenhandedness as between murderers and their victims. Well done, Mr. Cohn.

■ *Solitudinem faciunt pacem appellant* is as good an epitaph as any for the nation of Tibet, whose wretched people—those of them not put to the sword by the Chinese army, or starved to death in artificial famines, or driven into exile—have now been incorporated into China's Greater East Asian Co-Prosperity Sphere. In the eyes of Chinese leaders, the Dalai Lama, who owns the hearts of most surviving Tibetans, is a potential disturber of that peace, and therefore a bitter enemy. It is therefore perfectly logical that they should seek to exclude him from the Millennium World Peace Summit, a gathering of religious leaders held in New York during the last week of August. And it is, of course, dismally predictable that the financial backers of the summit (Ted Turner, the Ford Foundation, etc.) should kowtow to China's demands. Meanwhile, in early August the Chinese government seized 16,000 copies of an American book whose binding had been contracted out to a firm in Guangdong Province. It turns out that the book, a retrospective collection by a former official White House photographer, includes a shot of President Clinton with the Dalai Lama. There has been no official complaint from the U.S. about the book's interception. Will no one in authority speak up for poor, raped, starved, brutalized, enslaved Tibet, and for the gentle monk who still, after 40 years of exile and ignominy, holds aloft the shredded flag of her nationhood?

■ Lori Berenson had a post-college career typical of a handful of Upper West Side girls. She dropped out of MIT to pursue radical politics and radical-chic tourism in Latin America. In 1994 she moved to Peru, where she joined the Tupac Amaru, a terrorist organization that specialized in assassinating Peruvian judges. Berenson claims she did not believe the group was violent; the Peruvians, who arrested her and sentenced her, in 1996, to life in prison, were impatient with her arguments. Her trial did not conform to American norms, but then her heroes were way beyond normal American fringe groups. The Peruvian government, probably reacting to pressure from Washington, has decided to give Berenson a new trial. That is more than a pampered *norteamericana* inserting herself into a revolutionary situation should expect.

■ Anthony Summers, an Irish journalist, has published a book alleging that Richard Nixon popped pills and beat his wife. Of course: Nixon was the Devil, and the Devil does only diabolical things. Too bad Joe Lieberman wasn't around to give him a scolding, and then say we should all move on.

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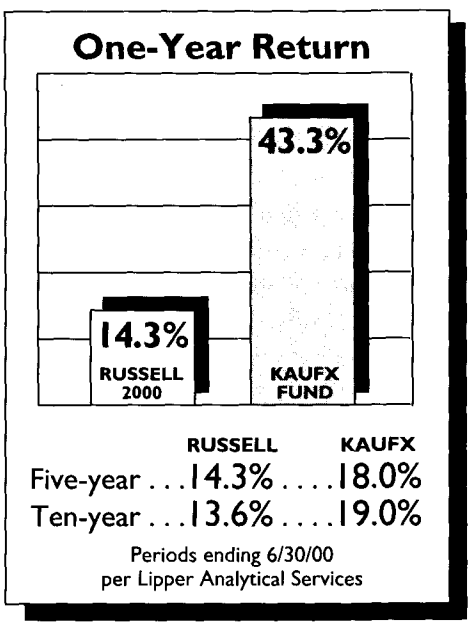

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■ Leaving a restaurant in Manistee, Mich., Janice Barton encountered a man who said something to his wife in Spanish. Ms. Barton, who does not understand that language, turned to her mother and said: "I wish these damned [five-letter ethnic slur] would learn to speak English." She was overheard by an off-duty sheriff's deputy, who followed her out and copied her license-plate number. In court, Ms. Barton was convicted on a misdemeanor charge of "insulting conduct in a public place" and sentenced to jail for 45 days. NATIONAL REVIEW is willing to offer a modest cash prize for the first news of a successful prosecution against a Spanish-speaker uttering the word "gringo" or the equivalent in a public place anywhere in these United States.

■ Some nonzero proportion of NATIONAL REVIEW readers are, we assume, also fans of the "rap" and "hip hop" styles of popular music. They will be gratified to know that an organization named CORAD (Citizens Opposing Racism and Discrimination) has now issued a compact disc of rap and hip-hop songs on conservative themes. Available on the CORAD website, the CD track list includes titles such as "Liberal Democrat Education is Wack," "Communist Coddlers," "Gun Control is Racist," and "Liberal Hollywood Hypocrites." Who says the culture war is lost?

THE KITCHEN SINK

The time has come to throw it in—
The temple and Al's sickly grin
When nuns stuffed stiff with Chinese cash
Made cameras roll and dentures flash.
The videos have been prepared;
A luscious one has just been aired,
And when the final one's been shown,
Those coffees can sustain a groan.

—W. H. VON DREELE

CAMPAIGN 2000

Change the Tone

THE campaign is going badly for George W. Bush. Thoughtful supporters will not, to be sure, be too disturbed by the polls that have him slightly behind Gore. Nor will they be especially troubled that the campaign has been off its stride, distracted by Dick Cheney's stock options and Bush's stray remarks about reporters. Even the best campaigns sometimes get wrong-footed, and the Bush campaign has a history of reacting poorly to a surge by its opponents before getting back on track.

The weakness of the campaign is not anything that happened in August. It is the strategy it has consistently followed. While we have long found much to admire in Gov. Bush's program, we have always questioned the wisdom of making "compassionate conservatism" the theme of his campaign. Its chief defect is that it does not provide a compelling reason for voters to make him president. His campaign has instead proceeded as though voters already wanted him to be president and its task were to prevent them from changing their minds. The strategy has been defensive, designed to make people like Bush and prevent them from associating him with what they dislike about Republicans. The Bush campaign was annoyed that Gore's attacks knocked it off its education message in late August. But Bush shouldn't have been spending so much time on education in the first place. A Republican is not going to win a tight election on such issues.

He will win it by making the public prefer a conservative to a liberal. Bush seems to pride himself on being a different kind of Republican, one who has transcended the old debates between Left and Right. But whether he likes it or not, the strongest arguments against Gore are not based on Bush's superior character or style; they are conservative arguments against Gore's program. These arguments Bush has been reluctant to make. He hasn't been pointing out that the Kyoto global-warming accord Gore favors would raise taxes on the middle class and make cars more expensive. Or that public financing of campaigns would amount to welfare for politicians. It is not enough to denounce Gore's antibusiness rhetoric as out of date. Bush should point out that by trashing the stocks of some of America's most successful industries, Gore is hurting millions of voters now. To shrink from saying so, on the grounds that Republicans are seen as apologists for venal businesses, is itself out of date in investor America.

Bush advisers seem to believe that the economy has been so good for so long, it is not a real issue in the campaign. So they do not take seriously Gore's attempts to persuade the public that Bush's tax cut would threaten the economy. They obviously pay more attention to polls that suggest the public is very concerned about a perceived moral decline in the country—but also disinclined to do anything difficult to address that decline, such as discouraging divorce. Hence Bush's soft rhetoric about starting a new "responsibility era." It's a shrewd tactic for a front-runner. But Bush is not the front runner. In a tight election, voters who are up for grabs can be found on the harder ground of the economy.

That means that Bush has to make the case for his tax cut and for opening Social Security to private investment not just in moral terms, but also in macroeconomic terms, explaining that they would prolong the expansion. And explaining that Gore's program, with its massive spending and its departures from Clinton's centrism, would threaten that expansion. (It's okay to "go negative" if what you're saying is true.) Cheney's recent speech on the economy, along with the campaign's lining up of 300 economists who support its agenda, is a good

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start—but only a start. Bush himself ought to come out for Microsoft and against Internet taxes. He has offered many detailed plans in this campaign, but his pitch to the electorate remains too vague. He needs to connect the dot-coms.

THE MILITARY

Readiness or Not

In November 1999, the Army gave two of its ten combat divisions its lowest rating: not ready for war. Unfortunately for George W. Bush, the ratings were upgraded in July, before he said in his convention speech that two Army divisions, if called on by the commander in chief, "would have to report: 'Not ready for duty, sir.'" Bush's mistake allowed Gore to argue that Bush is inaccurately talking down "the strongest and best" fighting force in the world. The vice president is right about "the strongest and best"—after all, American subs actually float. Gore can also point to two straight years of increases in defense spending by the Clinton administration. But those increases are, in a way, impressive evidence of the readiness problem: They were undertaken precisely to lessen the administration's political vulnerability over it.

More evidence abounds: The Navy is shortening or canceling deployments because it lacks sufficient fuel or crew; the Air Force is flying 30-year-old planes at twice the recommended rate of use; some Army combat units are 50 percent short of infantry troops; and on and on (John Hillen amply documented the problem in his Feb. 9, 1998, NR cover story). Bush's two divisions may now be deemed ready according to the Army's complex accounting system, but the failing he was trying to illustrate is real and pervasive. And the threat it poses to military effectiveness is exacerbated by the promiscuous commitment of troops, shortsighted weapons procurement, and an ongoing morale crisis.

Bush has said he wants to reexamine America's overseas deployments, which has brought the expected charges of isolationism and irresponsibility from his opponents. But the military's overextension is plainly a matter of excessive demand as well as insufficient supply. Consider the Balkans. Clinton promised that American peacekeepers in Bosnia would not stay one day past a year—six years ago. Apologists for America's never-ending Balkans commitment claim that only 10,000 American troops are devoted to keeping Serbs and Kosovar Albanians from throwing rocks at each other. But another 10,000 troops support the troops suppressing the rock-throwing, and another 10,000 troops support the troops supporting the troops suppressing the rock-throwing. In addition, 20,000 troops are being either retrained after leaving the Balkans or trained in preparation for arriving there. So, most of America's European army is devoted, one way or the other, to Balkans civic work.

Meanwhile, the military is patching up its immediate readiness problems by borrowing against needed long-term projects. The successful weapons systems of Desert Storm were designed in the Carter years and acquired by Reagan. The Clinton administration has been content just to coast on those acquisitions. In 1990, nearly $80 billion was spent on procurement; by 1999, only $49 billion. By 2010 the average age of an American tank will be 23 years, probably older than the kid driving it. At this point, the best course is the one Bush advises: Instead of trying to maintain outdated systems, we should "skip ahead" to develop a new generation of weapons.

Finally, there is the military's dwindling morale, which has hampered efforts to recruit and retain members. Bush implies that this is mostly a matter of Clinton's atrocious moral example. But it is more directly related both to overdeployment—most guys didn't sign up to be sent on uncertain missions—and to the emasculation of the military culture. The Kassebaum-Baker commission in 1997 unanimously concluded that gender-integrated basic training, for instance, has led to reduced discipline, lower training standards, and declining morale. Yet Bush, so far, has made only the most timid noises about the destructive social experimentation going on with men and women in uniform.

The issue on which the readiness debate finally turns is what the military is for. It shouldn't be for international social work, or for preserving comfy contracts for existing weapons systems, or for making feminists feel better. It should be for fighting wars, with great ferocity and bloody-mindedness if necessary. If a President George W. Bush were to understand this, it would be the first, and most important, step toward ensuring American military might in this century.

MISSILE DEFENSE

A Failure to Defend

Vladimir Putin should crack a smile. The *Kursk* submarine disaster may have undermined his domestic political standing and sullied his image around the world. But in one place his fantasy of a Russia too muscular to be crossed is still honored, his word still enough to bend and break world leaders: the swath of Washington, D.C., from Foggy Bottom to 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue. President Clinton announced that he wouldn't even begin the groundbreaking for the Alaska-based radar that would be necessary to have a limited National Missile Defense system operational by 2005. His stated reason was that the technology isn't advanced enough, but administration officials confided to reporters another reason: Putin, our partner in the Anti–Ballistic Missile Treaty, wouldn't like it. And that was reason enough for the administration to drop an idea—defending American cities from missile attack—that it clearly regards as a bizarre leftover from the Reagan years. (Clinton reportedly has been reading Frances FitzGerald's book-length argument that missile defense has always been a "delusion.")

If there are still gaps in the technology, the Clinton administration bears much of the blame, as an exhaustive new report by Sen. Thad Cochran, *Stubborn Things: A Decade of Facts*

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About Ballistic Missile Defense, demonstrates. In 1992, the Bush administration had decided to pursue in earnest a ground-based interceptor and solicited proposals for contractors to begin developing it. But when the proposals arrived in February 1993, the Clinton administration sent them all back unopened. President Bush planned to request $4.2 billion for National Missile Defense in fiscal year 1995. Clinton scaled back that request to $226 million, and the Democratic Congress actually allocated $82 million—a meager sum, less than the cost of this year's most recent flight test. Only pressure from the Republican Congress, which passed a law last year mandating deployment as soon as technologically feasible, got Clinton to embrace missile defense, in one of the least passionate clutches of his administration.

Defense secretary Bill Cohen proposed an extensive ground-based system. The administration, with an anxious eye on Moscow, scaled that back too, developing a plan for just one interceptor and one missile-tracking radar—and putting the latter on an inhospitable Aleutian island (hence the long lead time). It turned out the Russians wouldn't go along with even the minor revisions to the ABM treaty necessary to accommodate its bargain-basement plan. So the administration had either to end its obeisance to the parchment gods of the ABM treaty (*Never! Never!*) or to hope for the failure of interceptor tests.

It got the latter, which made Clinton's decision easier politically. But that decision was still ill advised, even on his own terms. In his announcement, Clinton adverted to the "reasonable" chance that the technology will support a deployment by 2005. So why make it impossible by not starting to dig now? He acknowledged that the threat to the U.S. is "real and growing." So where's the sense of urgency? He said no country will have a veto over U.S. deployment. So what does he call Vladimir Putin's *nyet*?

RELIGION

One Nation, Under . . . ?

JOSEPH LIEBERMAN has been running his vice-presidential campaign like a one-man God squad, talking about his and Al Gore's faith—so much so that the Anti-Defamation League was moved to write him a letter rebuking his "overt expressions" of belief as "contrary to the American ideal."

If the ADL were right, there would have to be serious alterations to Mt. Rushmore. Lincoln's Second Inaugural Address was a dark meditation on the role of God in history, particularly the Civil War. Washington's Farewell Address (which Lieberman has been quoting on the stump) warned Americans never to indulge the supposition "that morality can be maintained without religion." Jefferson's Declaration of Independence said that Nature's God had entitled the United States to independence, and that the Creator had endowed men with inalienable rights. If all these men, and the politicians who agreed with them, are un-American, whom does that leave? Robert Ingersoll?

The ADL is not right. Projecting the terrors of a European past onto the American present, liberal Jews have been tempted to shelter behind militant secularism as a bulwark against the presumed depredations of their Christian neighbors. Yet the pogroms never seem to happen here. Is that because secularist watchdogs keep the Cossacks at bay? Or because the religious sense of Abraham Lincoln, and most Americans, is different from Hitler's? Refreshingly, the champion of good history and common sense in the most recent round of this ongoing debate is Jewish.

When religious opinions enter the arena, they must, like all opinions, be subject to definition and refinement. Sen. Lieberman has been comparing Bill Clinton to Moses, an identification which hitherto escaped Biblical exegetes. Lieberman has also been careful to say that religion's relevance to politics is "less a matter of programs or legislation" than "giving respect" to the role that faith plays "in the lives of individuals, and in the lives of the community." Appropriately then, he takes the Mario Cuomo position on an issue like abortion: He is personally opposed, but he doesn't want his understanding of what a fetus is to impinge on anyone else. Will he maintain his all-talk, no-action stance the next time Jesse Jackson urges the government to feed the hungry (i.e., support whatever welfare program is on the table)?

Acknowledging the importance of religion to public life does not end the discussion; it does not even really begin it. But it puts the censors and the silencers in their place.

CULTURE WATCH

Be Prepared. Very Prepared

ANYONE of a conservative inclination must occasionally have been struck by the impression that he has, while sleeping, passed over into a parallel universe, to awaken in a sort of looking-glass Orwellian world where peace is war, freedom is slavery, and so on. Thus it has been recently, as we have opened our daily newspapers to discover that, in the opinion of our ruling elites, one of the most dangerous and antisocial forces in this nation is . . . the Boy Scouts. A blistering editorial in the *New York Times*—responding to the paper's error-ridden report on the matter—praised those donors, municipalities, and federal agencies thought to have withdrawn support from the Scouts. Wagging a magisterial finger, the Grey Lady warned that: "The extended Boy Scout family needs to save the organization from its present self-destructive and discriminatory course."

In June this year, the Supreme Court confirmed the right of the Scouts to exclude homosexuals as scoutmasters. In so doing, the Court cited First Amendment rights of free expression and association. Thus thwarted, the homosexual lobby now seeks to destroy the venerable organization by leaning on those public agencies and corporations that assist it. There have already been white flags shown: United Way, Chase Manhattan Bank, and the State of Connecticut

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have all withdrawn support from the Scouts. Americans who believe that the Scouts ought to be free to determine their own, perfectly respectable way should vote with their feet and their pocketbooks, shunning such capitulationist organizations where they can.

Meanwhile, where is the party of social conservatism? Gov. Bush issued a forthright statement supporting the Scouts' right of access to federal lands, but the Republicans are not making the hay they should with the issue. The Democrats are backing off from it as fast as they can. Al Gore had to promise that if he is elected, the Boy Scouts "will be able to use federal lands." Janet Reno has ruled that the Interior Department need not cut ties with the Scouts. For all their driveling cant about "discrimination" and "inclusiveness," liberal politicians understand perfectly well just how keen American parents are to send their pre-teen boys off into the woods on a camping trip with a homosexual scoutmaster. Yet these pronouncements by Gore and Reno override a presidential executive order issued in June this year, prohibiting government agencies from cooperating with groups that discriminate against homosexuals. Neither Gore nor Reno nor any other Democratic politician objected to that order at the time. Is it beyond the wit—or courage—of Republicans to point this out?

■ NOTES & ASIDES ■

■ Dear Mr. Buckley: Regarding the letter from Mr. Lynch (July 17) in which he said that there are some English verbs that imply two separate actions or states of being, or one of each:

I have come up with a verb that actually implies many more than two actions, given its use in contemporary American society. The word is "drive," which has now come to mean any or all of the following: talk on a cell phone, use a computer, listen to music, daydream, shave, drink, eat, and apply makeup. All this in addition to operating a motor vehicle.

Sincerely,
Greg Crosby
Sherman Oaks, Calif.

Dear Mr. Crosby: Nice. But that wasn't the subject under consideration—the variety of meanings of a word. It was the contrariety we were talking about. See "Notes & Asides" in the August 28 issue.

Cordially, WFB

■ Dear Mr. Buckley: Will you allow one more letter on the state of your German vocabulary? In addition to the words called to your attention by other readers, I am willing to wager that you also know: kindergarten, angst, meister, wunderkind, verboten, blitzkrieg, putsch, zeitgeist, kaiser, lederhosen, lebensraum, tannenbaum, burgher, and bildungsroman.

Cordially and respectfully,
Eva B. Stevens
Northbrook, Ill.

Dear Mrs. Stevens: Actually, I don't know what bildungsroman means, but I will look it up.

Cordially, WFB

■ Dear Mr. Buckley: I was deeply offended by Mr. Carl B. Meadows's letter to you and by your flippant reply, regarding the John Birch Society (August 14).

I have been a proud member of the John Birch Society for 33 years. I have seen everything predicted by Mr. Robert Welch, its founder, come to pass: more government involvement in our lives, failing schools, more crime, the breakup of the family, more involvement of our military around the world, higher taxes, and destruction of our youth through drugs.

Anyone would have to be deaf, dumb, and blind to think this destruction of our wonderful country was just by happenstance and not a contrived effort for total control of our "dysfunctional" society. Dysfunctional nations need strong authoritarian leaders to control them.

I subscribed to your magazine six months ago, and although you have good writers and I enjoy most of the articles, I wish to cancel my subscription. There are too many loyal Americans in the John Birch Society, trying to stop the slide toward world government, for me to be part of any derision of it.

Sincerely,
Mrs. Louise G. Rickert
Palmetto, Fla.

Dear Mrs. Rickert: We are very suspicious when we lose a reader. There are people who plot against us. Who have you been talking to?

Anxiously, WFB

■ Dear Mr. Buckley: When George W. Bush recently announced his vice-presidential choice, politicians—in lockstep with the media mules—used an unfamiliar word to denigrate Mr. Cheney.

Day after day, parrot after parrot repeated the same word (how was that planned?) that you used back in 1964.

On page 80 of your latest book, *Let Us Talk of Many Things*, you address the New York Conservative party, celebrating its second anniversary:

"America has not acquired the mien, let alone the habit, of great power. We have not even acquired *gravitas*."

Either the spinmeisters are reading your book, or it took them 36 years to catch up to you.

Ah, the joy of reading Buckley! (But not without pain—I'm still working on *otiose*.)

Sincerely,
Joe La Zizza
New Milford, N.J.

Dear Mr. La Zizza: You have a good eye, hardly otiose.

Cordially,

—WFB

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■ CAMPAIGN 2000 ■

'Say or Do Anything'

Al Gore's career as a phony

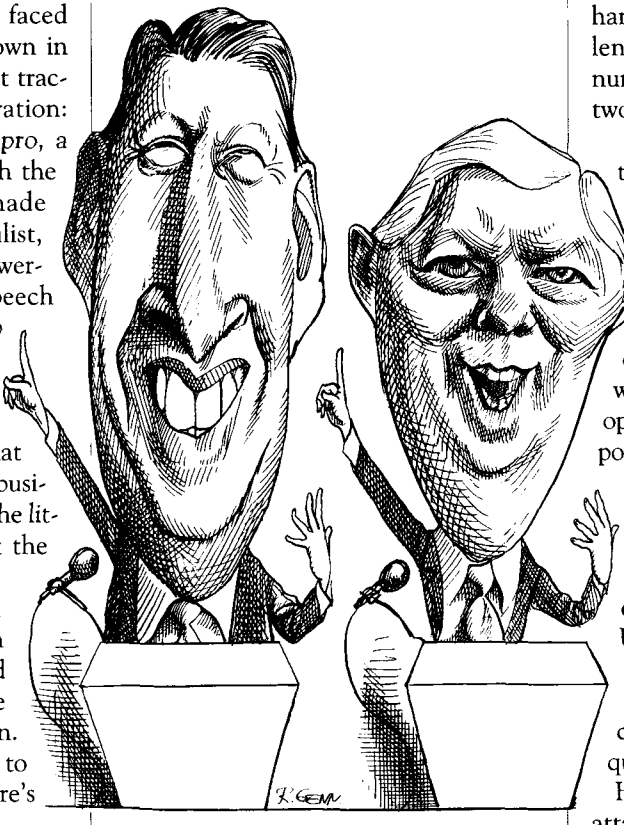
NOEMIE EMERY

THE Democratic contender faced serious problems: He was down in the polls, scoffed at, unable to get traction. Then came the transfiguration: The candidate—a Washington pro, a total insider, all too at home with the big-money interests—was remade overnight as the compleat populist, wholly at war with all that was powerful. His clothes changed. His speech changed. With the help of Bob Shrum, his media guru, this ex-moderate, ex-technocrat, ex-insider was soon pounding the table in paroxysms of fury at what the interests he had always done business with had been inflicting on "the little man." It's the people against the powerful; my fight is yours.

The candidate was Dick Gephardt, running for president in 1988. Today's Al Gore has faced the same plight, with the same strategy and even the same adman. And if the Republicans know how to play it, they can ensure that Gore's campaign meets the same fate.

After Gephardt's 1988 remake, his poll numbers soared; the press swooned, and he started to look like a winner. He won the Iowa caucuses, won South Dakota, and came in second in New Hampshire to Michael Dukakis, who governed a neighboring state. In *The New Yorker*, Elizabeth Drew called Gephardt's "re-design of himself" a political masterstroke, even while noting that the retooling was "fraudulent," that "before his transformation he had been a cool politician" who was "cozy with both corporate and labor lobbies, whose money he continues to take."

Gephardt was also similar to Gore in his record of shifting on social positions, to please the base of his party. Most notoriously, Gephardt at one time supported a constitutional amendment banning abortion, but later became resolutely pro-choice.



Al Gore and Dick Gephardt by Roman Genn

In her 1988 piece, Drew painted a picture uncannily similar to today's Gore: "Gephardt has become a disciplined campaigner, by dint of very hard work . . . Actually and figuratively, he never has a hair out of place. He is not humorless, but he is in all respects tidy, and he's not a lot of laughs . . . Gephardt has probably worked harder—or longer, at least—at getting the nomination than any other Democrat. But one has the inescapable feeling that Gephardt is doing it by the numbers." The concern about Gephardt, in short, was that he appeared . . . inauthentic.

In the end, this brought down his candidacy. It was the Dukakis campaign that supplied the ammunition, in two classic ads. One showed an acrobat doing backflips on stage, to symbolize backflips on issues. The other was a long crawl of the names of Gephardt's corporate sponsors, with a voice-over saying: "Kinda makes you wonder. Is Dick Gephardt really fighting your fight—or theirs?" The message was that Gephardt's populism was probably fraudulent—and the message took. His poll numbers in Florida plunged 21 points in two weeks.

Al Gore is even more vulnerable to this kind of takedown than Gephardt was. Gephardt was a milkman's son who had made his own way to the center of power. Gore is a prince of Washington, a senator's son brought up in the heart of the establishment. Gephardt, moreover, was running in 1988—when the opposing party had spent eight years in power and it seemed politically astute to tap into people's discontents. Gore, in contrast, is running after eight years of rule by *his own* party, by an administration in which he claims to have been a full partner. Until August 17—the day of his convention speech—he was running on a platform of peace and prosperity, claiming that things had never gone quite so well in this country.

How did his team let the dark forces attain such a foothold? Gore does not say, but he does say other things, some of them odd. Days after his debut as a born-again populist, he said in a speech to a blue-collar audience, "We've got to continue having an approach that puts you first and that doesn't give in to the ones with connections, the ones with wealth, the ones with power above and beyond what the average family has in this country." And who are these sinister people, with the connections, the wealth, and the power, and who, it is implied, misuse them? Is it not the Gores? It is true that the Bushes and Kennedys also gave their children formidable advantages. But few took quite as readily as Al Gore to this culture of privilege. Says Bill Turque, his not unfriendly biographer: "Over the years [Gore's] inner circle had become dominated by lawyers and lobbyists immersed in the

Noemie Emery lives in Alexandria, Va., and writes frequently about politics and politicians.

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city's money-and-influence culture." From his first days in office, Gore was a vacuum for money; he made his rich friends much richer, and they then channeled money to him. Whatever he might have done for the afflicted, Gore has done much to comfort the comfortable, enrich the rich, and make the powerful and well-connected still more so.

Gore's career has been studded with people who have shady pasts and engage in practices that skirt the very limits of the law. His first presidential run in 1988 was bankrolled by Nathan Landow, a Maryland millionaire, and a consortium of other rich men eager to invest in a "moderate" Democrat. A heavy donor to Jimmy Carter in the 1976 election, Landow was, Turque says, "a shoo-in for an ambassadorial post until the story of his business relationship with Joe Nesline, a Washington gambler with ties to Meyer Lansky's organization, landed in the papers. Landow was never charged with any wrongdoing . . . [but] would turn up on the margins of several scandals of the Clinton-Gore era." Kenneth Starr, for example, investigated whether Landow might have committed obstruction of justice in "urging . . . Kathleen Willey not to tell [Paula] Jones's lawyers that Clinton had groped her." (Starr never charged Landow.)

Another Gore donor was Howard Glicken, a high flyer who has feted the Gores at his mansion in Florida. In 1985, he and his partner were fired from a Miami bank for taking commissions that the bank saw as kickbacks. In 1991, the partner was convicted of laundering drug money through Glicken's firm. Through Gore, Glicken was recommended for a government post, taken on federal trade and diplomatic missions, and visited the White House 70 times. In 1996, he raised $2 million for the Democrats; in 1998, he pled guilty to soliciting illegal contributions from a foreign national.

Peter Knight, a senior adviser to the Gore-Lieberman campaign, was Gore's first chief of staff and is now—thanks to the Gore link—a very rich lawyer. According to the Turque biography, an aide from the early Gore days remembers him as "almost . . . in awe of the lobbyists that would come by the office" and eager to work with and for them. In 1991, he became one, and shortly thereafter his career soared with Gore's nomination for vice president. As deputy director of personnel for the 1992 Clinton transition, he planted friends and loyalists in government agencies, who remembered him fondly when he came to them later on behalf of clients. An amazing number of government contracts started coming the way of Knight's clients, even as the clients made hefty donations to Democrats. Turque writes that Knight's company helped Fluor, an Irvine, Calif., firm, get a $5 billion contract with the Department of Energy—and that two months before that contract was made official, Fluor donated $100,000 to the Democrats.

■

If Gore's populist pitch appears inauthentic, it's of a piece with his many other retoolings.

■

More donations, and more contracts, followed. Reported Ceci Connolly in the *Washington Post*: "In 1997 Knight was investigated by the Justice Department for his work on behalf of Molten Metal Technology, a client that had won a total of $32 million in federal energy contracts in the 1990s. The Massachusetts company and its officers gave at least $90,000 to Democratic campaigns in 1996, and also gave a member of Knight's family $20,000 worth of Molten Metal stock." What the company paid for was access to Gore, who showed up at its plant on Earth Day in 1995 to praise the company as a "success story" and "a shining example" of American know-how. The company later lost its Energy contracts, in the face of questions about its technological methods, and shareholder suits alleging fraud.

Knight also raised money to improve the vice president's mansion, and to endow a chair in memory of Gore's sister at the University of Tennessee. "It's like a spider's web," campaign-finance gadfly Fred Wertheimer told Connolly. "The influence the political money people gain through raising large sums of money translates into their own personal financial gain."

In this heady world, "little people" tend to vanish, or become simply means to an end. This apparently is what occurred in 1996 and 1997, when two impoverished Indian tribes in Oklahoma gave $107,000 to the DNC in the hope of obtaining a government hearing for their attempts to recover lost tribal lands. Their cash bought them one lunch at the White House, no action, and more requests for money from the DNC. It was at this point, it seems, that Landow stepped in. In the words of the *Washington Post*'s Susan Schmidt: "Tribal representatives said Nathan Landow, a long-time fund-raiser for Vice President Gore, sought to represent the tribes and brought in Clinton-Gore campaign manager Peter Knight's lobbying firm to help win return of the tribes' native lands. Tribal officials said Landow touted access he and Knight have to top Clinton administration aides, and even explicitly warned he would ensure the tribes would not get their land back if they did not sign a development contract giving him 10 percent of the land's potentially lucrative mineral rights. . . . the tribes said Knight's firm . . . has asked for a $100,000 retainer plus $10,000 a month." The project was dropped when the story was published. Neither Knight nor Landow was ever criticized publicly by Gore.

How can Al Gore, with these friends and this record, keep trying to play the populist? Howell Raines of the *New York Times* suggests that Gore's new populism "eases [Gore's] inner anxiety about his privileged background" and "connects [Gore] to his father." But when the elder Gore pushed his populist buttons, he was not indicting himself. He worked his way up from the poorest of backgrounds, and he was never rich when he served in the Senate. Nobody called Albert Gore Sr. the "solicitor general." He did not go to Buddhist temples. His friends did not shake down impoverished Indians. His populist pitch was not a reversal; it was the theme of a lifetime.

If Gore's populist pitch appears inauthentic, it's of a piece with his many other retoolings—from pro-lifer to pro-choicer, from the NRA's friend to its foe, et cetera. We now have the moderate, high-tech, free-market futurist turning into the retrograde populist firebrand, for as long as it

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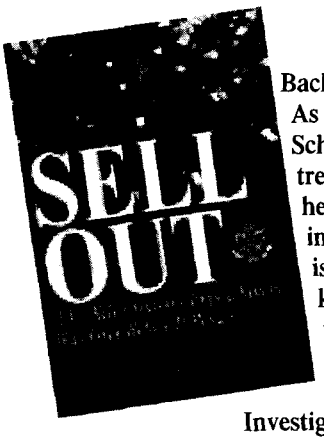

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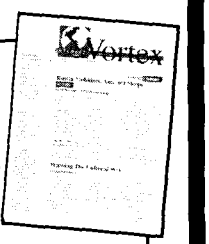

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works. This is standard for Gore, in what Gore-watcher Debra Saunders has called the "Gore Disconnect"—a disconnect with himself, or with reality, that allows him to do U-turns on issues, or take mutually exclusive positions, while denying that conflicts exist.

In 1988, Gore professed shock at Gephardt's apparent insincerity. He held a press conference to charge Gephardt with making "wholesale changes in dozens and dozens of key positions." A Gore campaign ad needled Gephardt's switch on abortion: "He was against abortion, but before he ran for president [he] changed his mind." "Who is the real Dick Gephardt?" ran another Gore advertisement. "Is it the man who says it's our fight or the one whose campaign is financed by big corporations? . . . Is it the congressman whose first speech in Washington attacked abortion, or the candidate for president who liberalized his views? Dick Gephardt. As a candidate, he'll say or do anything to get elected."

"The next president of the United States has to be someone the American people can believe will stay with his convictions," said Gore at a debate.

The Bush campaign's admen should listen—and learn. **NR**

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■ **CAMPAIGN 2000 II** ■

Dr. Feel-good

Bush and Gore peddle their drug plans

RAMESH PONNURU

THE Bush campaign had planned to spend the week before Labor Day talking about education. The governor dropped by Springfield High School in Toledo, the hundredth school he has visited during the campaign. But nobody paid much attention. The hot issue of the moment is prescription drugs for seniors. Bush ended up spending the week on the defensive, explaining that he would come up with a drug plan soon.

Perhaps Bush believed all those polls suggesting that education is the public's top priority. Actually, most voters think their kids' school is just fine, and won't be improved by presidential attention. But they really are worried about what might happen to them when they're old and sick. And while Bush appears to believe that middle-class voters want a president who is compassionate toward the poor and needy, Gore's success in pushing the drug issue suggests that they're more interested in government goodies for themselves.

It's not as though there's a pressing need for more subsidies for the elderly. In 1997, the Department of Health and Human Services found that only 2 percent of senior citizens had difficulty obtaining prescription drugs. Two-thirds of them have health plans that cover drugs. Half of them, according to the National Academy of Social Insurance, spend less than $200 a year out of pocket to buy drugs.

The need Gore's plan addresses is strictly political: The Democratic share of the senior vote slipped in 1998, and the drug benefit is designed to win them back. Now polls are showing Gore ahead of Bush in Florida (picking a Jewish running mate probably helped Gore there too). Stanley Greenberg, Gore's top pollster, wrote in *The American Prospect* almost a decade ago that Democrats could win back the middle class by increasing its dependence on the federal government. That was what the Clintons' comprehensive health plan was designed to achieve. Getting voters hooked on drug benefits is merely the latest tactic.

Bush's initial stance was to support a new prescription-drug benefit as part of a thorough modernization of Medicare, one that includes elements of choice and competition as well as new benefits. A commission headed by John Breaux, a Democratic senator from Louisiana, proposed such a reform, modeled on the health program for federal workers. But the Gore campaign demanded that Bush be more specific. Gore said Bush had no plan, while also deriding the plan he had—Breaux's—as inadequate.

■

The need that Gore's prescription-drug plan addresses is strictly political.

■

Demands for specificity in presidential campaigns are often silly: Bush aides rightly complain that a president needs to outline broad goals but maintain the flexibility to achieve them in Congress. The demand is even more perverse in the present case because Bush could meet it only by offering a plan that concentrated exclusively on drug benefits. And that would be bad policy. John Goodman, head of the National Center for Policy Analysis and a health-care expert, points out that many seniors already have three health-insurance plans: Medicare Part A, Medicare Part B, and supplemental "Medigap" insurance. It's an inefficient system—the actuarial firm Milliman and Robertson estimates that seniors could afford full drug coverage merely by spending what is already spent on Medicare and Medigap—and adding yet another plan to it would hardly make it better.

A stand-alone drug benefit would

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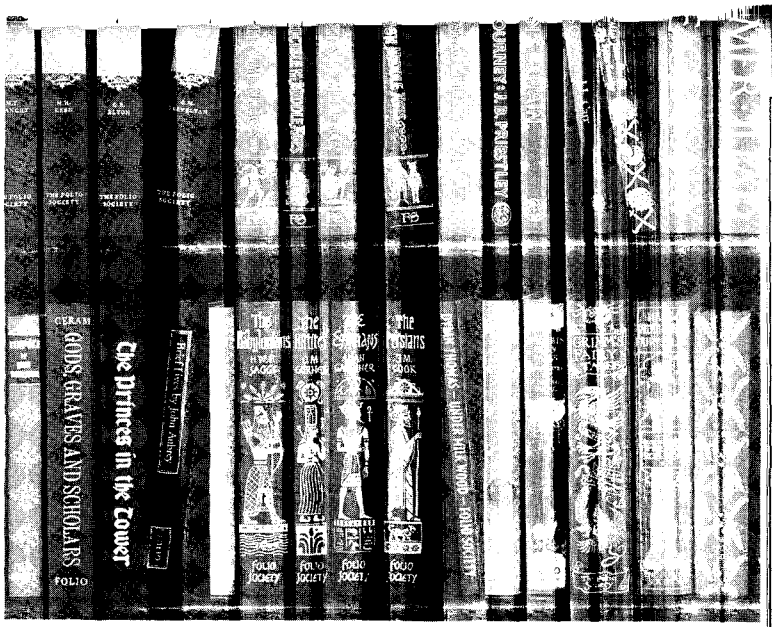

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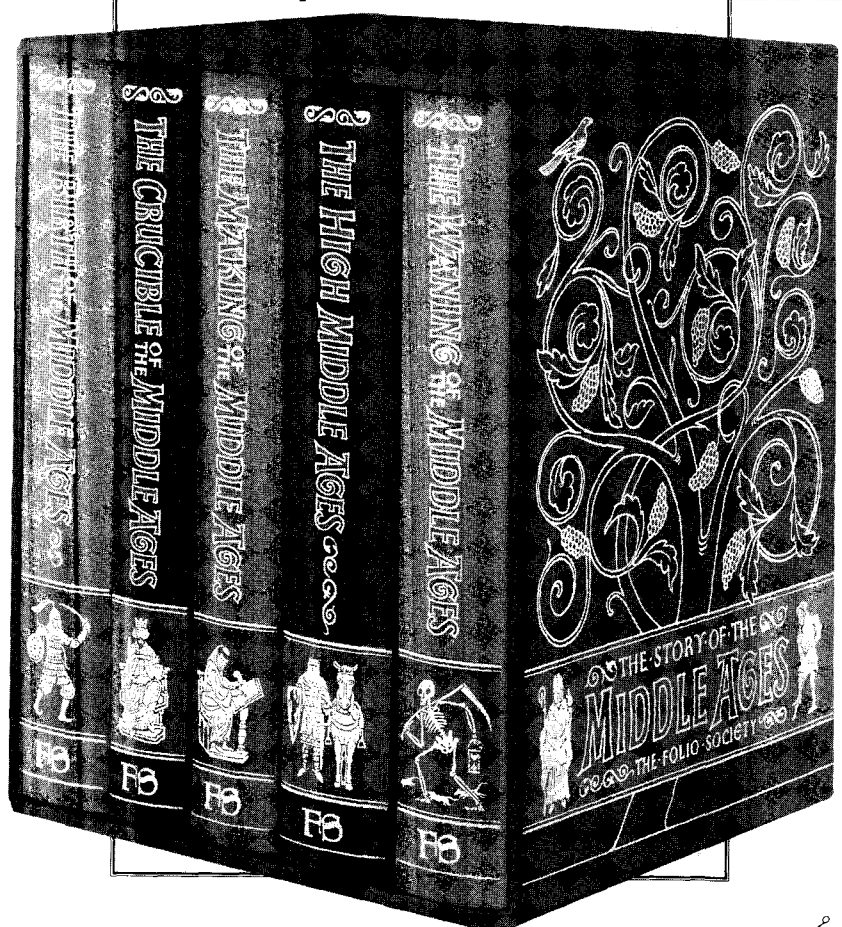
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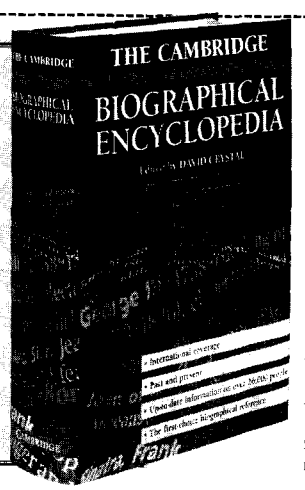

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suffer from the problem health-care economists call "adverse selection": The only people who would sign up would be people who are very likely to use the benefit. Furthermore, a federal drug benefit would cause Medigap policies to become stingier about drugs, which could leave many seniors worse off on balance. And a drug benefit would almost certainly lead to de facto price controls as the federal government tried to keep the cost of the program from exploding.

Because of the way the problem has been framed, Republicans have no politically attractive options. In the House, they cobbled together a plan to encourage private insurers to provide coverage of drugs. But the insurers themselves said the plan wouldn't work because of adverse selection and insufficient funding.

■

Because of the way the problem has been framed, Republicans have no politically attractive options.

■

Congressman Bill Thomas, a leading Republican voice on health care, urged Bush to endorse the House bill. It did help the House Republicans, who can now say they passed a drug benefit in the confidence that most people won't look at the details. But Bush did not want to endorse a plan that the Democrats already knew how to attack (by quoting the insurers, for instance). Besides, his policy wonks are a rather earnest bunch and preferred not to propose a plan that has no chance of working.

Scott Reed, the manager of Bob Dole's 1996 campaign, wanted Bush to take a different approach. Reed's Republican Leadership Coalition has gotten behind a bill by Republican senators Bob Smith and Wayne Allard. They would offer a new drug benefit at no cost to taxpayers: The expense would be covered by raising the Medicare deductible to $675. Seniors would cover expenses below that figure.

If Medicare were to function like an actual insurance policy, higher deductibles would make sense. Insurance is supposed to cover unpredictable, catastrophic expenses, not routine purchases that can be paid for out of pocket. But there's a reason government health-care programs generally don't offer that kind of insurance. It wouldn't benefit many voters, and those who would benefit would have an unfortunate tendency to die before the next election. That's why national health services are better at sending ambulances to cold sufferers than at treating life-threatening diseases. It's also, according to *New York Times* health-policy reporter Robert Pear, why Clinton's proposal for a drug benefit does not fully cover catastrophic drug costs: Clinton "wanted to provide some tangible benefit to a large number of people, rather than helping a small number with high drug expenses."

In the end, Bush opted to stick with the Breaux approach. But he also responded to the political pressure from Gore by offering an "immediate helping hand" to provide some drug benefits even before comprehensive Medicare reform could be enacted. Bush would spend $12 billion a year to help states cover drug costs for low-income seniors. Gore, of course, gave the plan an immediate back of his hand ("just what the drug industry ordered," said a spokesman).

It's unlikely that Congress will pass anything on drug benefits this year. But there has been some speculation that Congress and the president might reach a deal in the next two months: Republicans would get some tax cuts, Democrats would get the drug benefit, and everyone would avert a government shutdown.

If that happens, there is still some hope that good policy will prevail in the end. Twelve years ago, President Reagan was roped into supporting an expansion of Medicare to pay for, among other things, drug benefits. The bill passed. But, like Gore's drug proposal, it raised premiums for the elderly and was a bad deal for many of them. One Democratic solon found himself besieged in his car by a mob of angry oldsters. A year after the bill passed, there was an overwhelming vote to repeal it. **NR**

■ **THE ADMINISTRATION** ■

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MICHAEL CATANZARO

VERNON JORDAN, the consummate Washington insider, is a board member of American Express, which helped initiate the government's antitrust lawsuit against Visa and MasterCard. He is also a close friend of Joel Klein, who heads the antitrust division of the Justice Department. Klein was responsible for getting Jordan appointed to a committee that advises the department on antitrust cases. On February 26, 1997, after being introduced at a meeting of that committee by Klein, Jordan said, "I'm here very simply because Joel sent for me. Having said that, I want to say I'm happy to be here. I'm glad that he sent for me."

That Jordan, the same man who tried to get Monica Lewinsky a job at American Express to protect President Clinton, has not recused himself from the advisory committee is typical of the Clinton administration generally, and its antitrust regime in particular. Nixonian ethics prevail, and antitrust law is now a political weapon. When Nixon wanted more favorable coverage from the three major TV networks, he raised the threat of an antitrust suit. On a recently released tape, Nixon told aide Chuck Colson: "Our gain is more important than the economic gain. . . . Our game here is solely political. . . . As far as screwing [the networks] is concerned, I'm very glad to do it."

In the Clinton era, not much has changed. Consider the administration's

Mr. Catanzaro is a reporter for syndicated columnist Robert D. Novak.

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reaction to criticism of a gun-control deal it reached with Smith & Wesson. The company's competitors strongly objected to the deal, ridiculing it as a "sellout." Some gun manufacturers vowed to pull advertisements in magazines that accept advertising from Smith & Wesson. Then Andrew Cuomo, the secretary of housing and urban development, threatened to pursue antitrust litigation against these gun manufacturers. Shortly afterward, the Justice Department launched a full-scale investigation of whether this vow constitutes illegal collusion.

When antitrust enforcement is politicized, it becomes a way for politically connected companies to hobble rivals they can't beat in the marketplace. The Visa-MasterCard case nicely illustrates the point. The credit-card giants forbid their member banks to offer cards other than Visa or MasterCard. Nearly two years ago, the Justice Department filed a suit claiming that these exclusive networks unfairly shut out American Express, and thus hinder competition.

Yet—by all accounts other than those of American Express and the Justice Department—the credit-card industry is in fact already fiercely competitive. According to CardWeb.com, consumers have over 25,000 different credit-card products to choose from. It's hard to maintain that collusion has kept this market from developing and hurt consumers. Kelly Presta, vice president of Visa USA, says that consumers received over 4 billion credit-card solicitations in the mail last year. Almost anyone, including bankrupts, can get a card.

American Express trails Visa and MasterCard in the credit-card market not because of a conspiracy, but because of its own mistakes. Harvey Golub, chairman and CEO of American Express, admits that he underestimated credit-card diversification in the 1980s. "In the early days," he told the *New York Times* in 1995, "our view of the bank card was that it was a local shopping card that would never be a significant factor on a world scale. We looked down on it. Big mistake." Another big mistake was the company's decision in the mid 1980s to reject an American Airlines proposal to offer a joint credit card with frequent-flier miles. Relishing the opportunity, Citibank stepped in and closed the deal.

American Express has turned to the administration to save it from its own poor decisions. In a 1996 memo, the company described the Justice Department as a tool for undermining its two biggest rivals. Under the heading "Changing the Rules—Finding Allies," the memo suggested that the Justice Department could "accelerate the process" of beating them.

The company, of course, denies lobbying the department or influencing the case in any way. But court testimony suggests that American Express officials enjoyed a cozy relationship with Klein and his subordinates. The CEO, Golub, admitted that he met with department officials "several times," while Stephen McCurdy, a vice president of American Express, met with them twice. John Elliot, an American Express consultant paid $504,000 for his services, had eight to ten meetings with Justice officials.

■

Under Clinton, the Justice Department has unleashed the power of antitrust.

■

The American Express memo said that "Visa is the Microsoft of credit cards." Too true. In the Microsoft case, struggling competitors used the government's antitrust enforcers to gain advantage. In the fall of 1997, Netscape's Jim Barksdale invited Klein to his home for breakfast to discuss the case. The Project to Promote Competition in the Digital Age—known as "ProComp" and funded by Netscape, Sun Microsystems, and Oracle, among others—has written that the best way to seek "relief" from Bill Gates was to "encourage DOJ to proceed promptly with its longstanding investigation concerning Microsoft."

Such influence peddling goes hand in hand with the hostility to successful businesses that animates the Clinton antitrust apparatus. Robert Pitofsky, now chairman of the Federal Trade Commission, headed up the 1992 transition team on antitrust, and in 1993 succinctly summed up the Clinton antitrust approach. The Reagan administration had mounted "about as minimal an antitrust program as can be imagined," and antitrust had been stepped up a little under Bush—but under Clinton, Pitofsky suggested, "antitrust enforcement would be more vigorous. Close questions in all areas would more often lead to government challenges. Unjustified nonenforcement at the federal level would end."

The administration has lived up to Pitofsky's prediction. The Justice Department has unleashed the power of antitrust in ways strikingly reminiscent of the anti-corporate fervor of the 1960s and 1970s. From 1994 to 1999, the antitrust division filed a total of 481 cases, vastly increased its investigations of supposed monopolies, and intensified reviews of mergers and acquisitions. Under Reagan and Bush, the department had filed just three cases concerning the conduct of monopolies. Under Clinton, twelve such lawsuits have been filed.

In the Clinton administration's first three years, antitrust-division head Anne Bingaman increased the enforcement section's personnel and budget, and increased the review of mergers and acquisitions. In fact, according to D. J. Armentano, a professor of economics at the University of Hartford, between 1993 and 1996, the number of merger investigations initiated by the department increased from 102 to 237. That upward trend has continued under Klein. According to Robert Levy of the Cato Institute, the division will be handling an estimated 514 antitrust cases this year, an increase of 35 percent over the last two years.

The division has been relentless in stopping major mergers. In July, it effectively blocked a major telecommunications deal between MCI-Worldcom and Sprint. Attorney general Janet Reno said the deal threatened "to undermine the competitive gains achieved since the [Justice] Department challenged AT&T's monopoly of the telecommunications industry 25 years ago."

Not surprisingly, Pitofsky's FTC has been just as aggressive as Klein on the merger front. Over the last few years, the FTC has gone after mergers in many industries. It has especially targeted high-tech, investigating antitrust issues in a long list of companies, including Intel and Cisco Systems. Most recently, America Online's $113 billion buyout of Time Warner has occasioned an FTC

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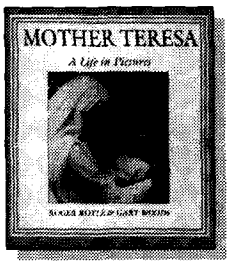

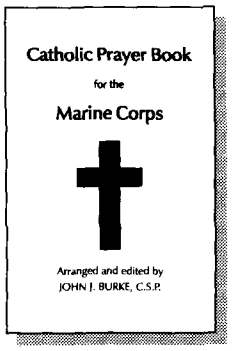

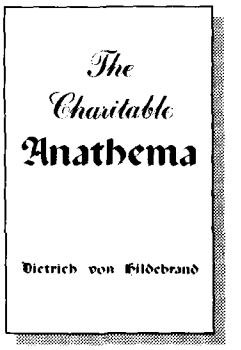

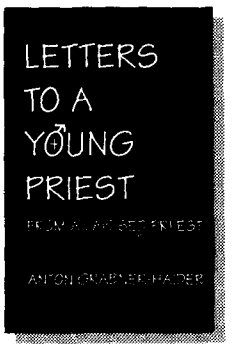

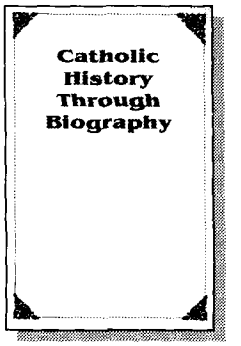

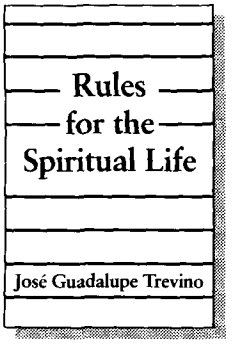

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investigation of AOL's popular instant-messaging service. Not that traditional bricks-and-mortar companies have escaped scrutiny: In 1997, the FTC nixed the proposed merger between Staples and Office Depot.

Justice and the FTC are not the only agencies assuming antitrust oversight. The Federal Communications Commission, under the stewardship of William Kennard, has acted like a de facto antitrust body, according to Harold Furchtgott-Roth, an FCC board member. Kennard recently played an important role in blocking the MCI-Worldcom/Sprint merger, which he said would be a "surrender" of the robust competition that has driven down long-distance prices.

The administration also has imposed regulatory mandates disguised as antitrust enforcement. Companies seeking mergers or partnerships are subjected to an array of agency-imposed investigations and regulations. "Mergers and acquisitions today go through an endless parade of horribles," says Adam Thierer, a policy analyst at the Heritage Foundation. "Companies are subjected to [the Justice Department], the FTC, and the FCC, and in order to get a deal, they must accede to conditions that amount to regulatory burdens."

The SBC-Ameritech merger is a case in point. The FCC required, among many other things, that the new company compete for local telephone service in 30 metropolitan areas outside its service territory. Failure to do so would result in a fine of $40 million for each violation. Not surprisingly, the company complied.

The administration's antitrust regime, in short, has been hyperactive, politicized, and regulatory. Yet the Republican response has been mixed at best. A Senate Judiciary staff memo distributed in 1998 praised antitrust as a regulation-free alternative to overreaching federal bureaucrats: "The antitrust laws, unlike government regulation, are designed to protect free-market forces, rather than alter them." Similarly, House Judiciary Committee chairman Henry Hyde recently wrote that "antitrust law is the antithesis of government regulation." The budget for antitrust enforcement continues to expand. In 1995, $89.4 million was appropriated for the antitrust division. Five years later, the GOP Congress increased its budget to $110 million. The administration has requested $134 million for next year.

The trend is both clear and troubling. George W. Bush should understand what's at stake, both for the short-term economy and the long-term future of the free market. **NR**

■ CAMPAIGN 2000 III ■

Majority Rulers

How the GOP intends to keep the House

KATE O'BEIRNE

At the Los Angeles convention, Democratic congressional candidates saw their optimistic pitch to donors rudely interrupted by an unwelcome assessment from a key ally. Steve Rosenthal, political director of the AFL-CIO, told the *Washington Post*, "If you do the math race by race, it's difficult to see the Democrats winning the majority."

Two months before the House elections that will determine whether Republicans hold their slim 223-to-210 majority, it appears that the GOP's efforts to follow Tip O'Neill's advice and focus on local issues will pay off. But Republicans still fear that over the next several weeks, Bill Clinton could change the current political climate—and hurt incumbents—by nationalizing congressional races the way Newt Gingrich did in 1994.

A close analysis of competitive seats reveals that Democrats do face an uphill battle to win the House, despite the fact that Republicans are on the defensive in most of the 40 competitive races. Owing to self-imposed term limits, retirements, and members seeking promotions, Republicans are defending 26 open seats, and Democrats only eight. Half of the GOP's open seats are in safe Republican districts, but others, like Jack Metcalf's in Washington and Tom Campbell's in California, are at risk. Republican open seats in Montana and Utah are also competitive, but GOP strategists hope that their candidates will benefit from big wins there by George W. Bush. Likewise, Senate candidates Rick Lazio (N.Y.) and Bob Franks (N.J.) should rack up big margins in their own congressional districts, and thus help GOP candidates win the House seats they are vacating.

While electoral fortunes ebb and flow with each new poll and fundraising report, Republican strategists currently have nine of their incumbents on a "most vulnerable" list. Three of these members are in California, and they are not counting on a major Bush effort in that state. Representative Jim Rogan, a stalwart House manager during impeachment, holds a marginal GOP seat in a district that Bill Clinton carried comfortably twice. He is up against a Democratic opponent who is expected to match the $6 million Rogan plans to spend. Two of Rogan's California colleagues, Steven Kuykendall and Brian Bilbray, are also on the endangered list.

In Washington State and Oklahoma, Republican members who kept their term-limits pledges present pickup opportunities for Democrats; the broken pledge of Washington's George Nethercutt has put him at serious risk of defeat. Other vulnerable members include Pennsylvania's Don Sherwood, who faces a rematch with one of the late governor Bob Casey's sons; Ernie Fletcher, in a tough Kentucky district; and John Hostettler, an Indiana third-termer who specializes in close races. The Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee and the AFL-CIO have hammered all of these at-risk incumbents with early issue ads on education and health care, but the Republican campaign committee's aggressive challenges to their accuracy have made the ads themselves an issue. Some local TV stations have pulled them from the air, while local media have condemned "scurrilous and misleading" commercials and criticized Democrats for using "Clintonian tactics."

The list of vulnerable incumbents could have been longer, and Dick Gephardt a sure bet for Speaker, if not for early, aggressive action by House Republican leaders to take advantage of their majority status. As the new

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Congress was being sworn in, leadership aides began meeting with the staffs of members with potential reelection problems. In January 1999, some members, including New York's Jack Quinn, were counseled to discourage challengers by raising big money early. Within about six months, Quinn and a half-dozen of his vulnerable colleagues had $500,000 each in their campaign chests. "We have done everything in our power to try to localize these elections," explains one GOP leadership aide, who expects that Democrats will learn what Republicans have long appreciated—that it's very tough to knock off a majority party's incumbents. The House leaders can dispense enough pork and policy, with a dash of pandering, to insulate their members from political trouble.

■

A close analysis of competitive seats reveals that Democrats do face an uphill battle to win the House.

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Congressional action can also prompt a stack of favorable press clippings back home. After the appropriators take care of their own districts, 49 percent of what's left over goes to the "vulnerable list," estimates one veteran GOP staffer. At the request of these members, the airport and transportation bills were chock-full of federal construction projects to please constituents of vulnerable Republicans. During his first term, North Carolina Representative Robin Hayes played a key role in providing tax breaks for soldiers deployed overseas, and offered a resolution declaring the U.S. soldier the "person of the century." Both measures were predictably popular in a district that includes Fort Bragg. Jim Rogan's district is home to the country's largest Armenian community, which is likely to be pleased with a pledge Speaker Denny Hastert made during a visit to the area to schedule a House vote on a resolution condemning the genocide of Armenians.

The House leadership's largesse has even been extended to challengers with a good shot at unseating Democratic incumbents. Nevada state senator Jon

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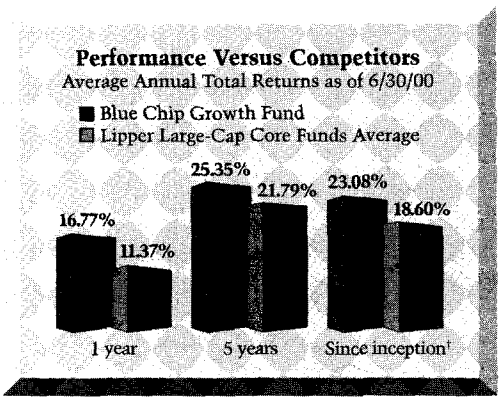

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Porter is the likely challenger to first-term Representative Shelley Berkley. Porter was a hero back home when he persuaded House leaders to postpone action on a bill to prohibit NCAA gambling in Las Vegas.

■

By concentrating on local issues, Republicans expect to remain in the majority after November.

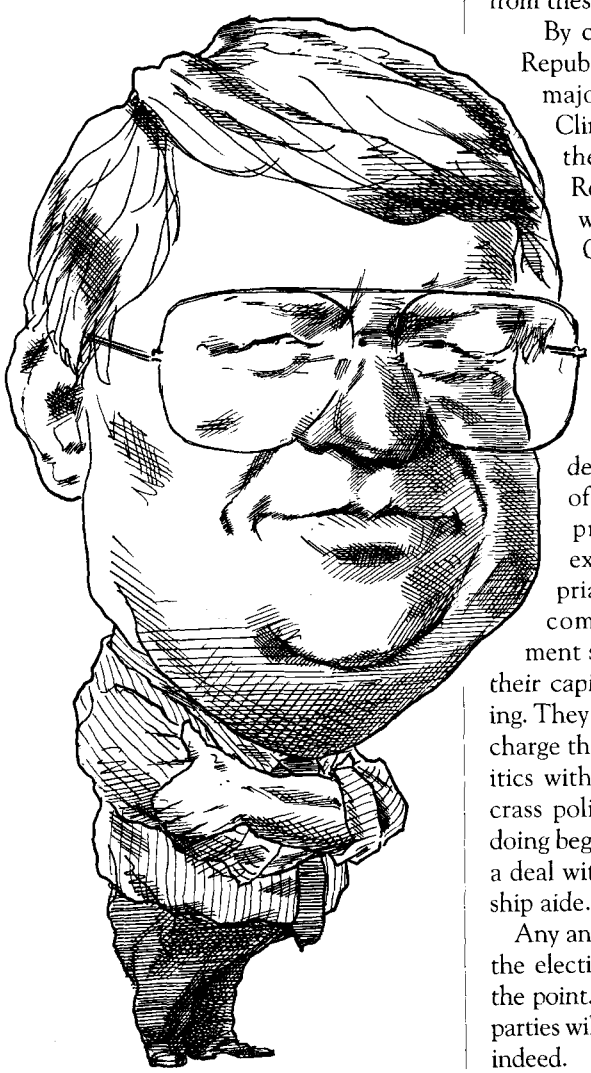
■

In addition to Berkley, other vulnerable Democratic incumbents include party-switcher Mike Forbes in New York and New Jersey's Rush Holt, who is facing former congressman Dick Zimmer. Vulnerable open seats for Democrats include those being vacated by Senate candidates Debbie Stabenow in Michigan and Ron Klink in Pennsylvania. Pat Danner, who is retiring, leaves a district at risk in Missouri, and Republicans think that Owen Pickett's Virginia district is already in their column.

Republicans are convinced that they will be able to defend their members and take full advantage of pickup opportunities, despite the formidable resources at the Democrats' command. As of July 1, the Democratic campaign committee had $37 million on hand—$15 million more than the Republicans. Democrats can count on additional campaign help from the unions, environmental groups, and trial lawyers, while, as one GOP campaign aide points out, "business groups don't run campaign ads." But, through a fundraising campaign called Battleground 2000, GOP members in safe districts are being asked to contribute from their own war chests to help retain their majority; GOP leaders hope to raise $16 million from these members.

By concentrating on local issues, Republicans expect to remain in the majority after November. But if Clinton succeeds in nationalizing the campaign, all bets are off. Republicans recognize that they won the House when President Clinton was the issue in 1994; by blaming them for gridlock this fall, Clinton can try to win it back for the Democrats. In this year's budget showdown, Republicans expect the president to demand action on a patient's bill of rights and a new Medicare prescription-drug benefit in exchange for approving appropriations bills. Their failure to comply would mean a government shutdown; on the other hand, their capitulation would be demoralizing. They hope that Bush will echo their charge that the president is playing politics with the budget. "As soon as the crass politics of what the president is doing begins to hurt Al Gore, we'll have a deal with Clinton," predicts a leadership aide.

Any analysis of what would happen "if the election were held today" is beside the point. Over the next few weeks, the parties will be playing for very high stakes indeed. **NR**



Speaker Denny Hastert by David Smith

■ **CAMPAIGN 2000 IV** ■

The Bosom of Abraham

How the junior senator fares in Michigan

JOHN J. MILLER

Traverse City, Mich.

IF Spencer Abraham needed an even clearer signal that his reelection to the Senate is in trouble, he got it at a GOP breakfast here in July. It's not that the crowd of Republican activists received him poorly; they clapped politely when he reached the podium, and listened intently to several minutes of unmemorable remarks. It's what happened next: Abraham introduced Michigan's lieutenant governor, Dick Posthumus. The banquet hall burst with excitement. Men wearing red blazers in honor of the local cherry harvest jumped to their feet, set off like the fireworks that had lit up Grand Traverse Bay the night before. Minutes later, Gov. John Engler won a similar response.

Posthumus won't appear on the ballot for another two years, and Engler's future is term-limited and unclear. It's Abraham whose job is on the line in a few months, and he's perilously close to losing it. Will a Republican audience that won't stand up for him today canvass neighborhoods for him when the cold comes in October?

This question has prompted any number of pundits to declare Abraham the Senate's most vulnerable incumbent this year. He's also a bellwether: If he wins, there's a good chance George W. Bush also will triumph, and Republicans will hold the line in the Senate; if he loses, the GOP may take a beating all over the country. But even more is at stake for conservatives. This year's election will test the strength of the Senate's class of 1994—nine members swept into office on a conservative tidal wave and now facing voters for the first time as incumbents. If their success is to have lasting

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consequence, it will take victories in swing states like Michigan this fall. Unfortunately, Abraham has spent much of the last five years hurting his chances. For months, he has looked like a goner. That's starting to change, but his race ought to be a nail-biter.

When Abraham arrived in the Senate, the conservative movement had high hopes for him. Born to a family of modest means in Lansing, he went to Harvard Law School and helped found the Federalist Society, now a vital part of the conservative counter-establishment. He returned to Michigan and, at the age of 30 in 1982, became the GOP's state chairman. Over the next eight years, he plotted a conservative resurgence that culminated in Engler's 1990 upset of Gov. Jim Blanchard. He went on to work for Vice President Quayle and was later a serious candidate to head the Republican National Committee. Back in Michigan, he declared for the Senate, won a tough primary, and rode to a nine-point victory.

Colleagues consider him brainy, and he's well-liked—so smooth behind the scenes that he quickly earned a good relationship with majority leader Bob Dole (whose 15 percent across-the-board tax-cut idea in 1996 came from Abraham), and then became a confidant of Dole's successor, Trent Lott. He's been the chief sponsor of more than a dozen bills passed by the Senate—a good record, even for a veteran lawmaker—and has carved out a policy niche for himself in high technology, writing laws on digital signatures, cyber-squatting, and worker visas. If Abraham survives reelection, there might be a leadership post in his future.

This Senate seat is his first elective office at any level, and he's made rookie mistakes that another politician with a fuller résumé might have avoided. Ask just about any Republican in Michigan for an assessment of Abraham, and the response will include the claim that he isn't back home enough. He may be better known in Silicon Valley, Calif., than in Saginaw, Mich. The charge piques Abraham—"I've been to every county at least twice," he complains—but even his closest allies repeat it. And it's clear, when you spend time around him, that he derives little pleasure from retail politics. He doesn't seem to enjoy himself on

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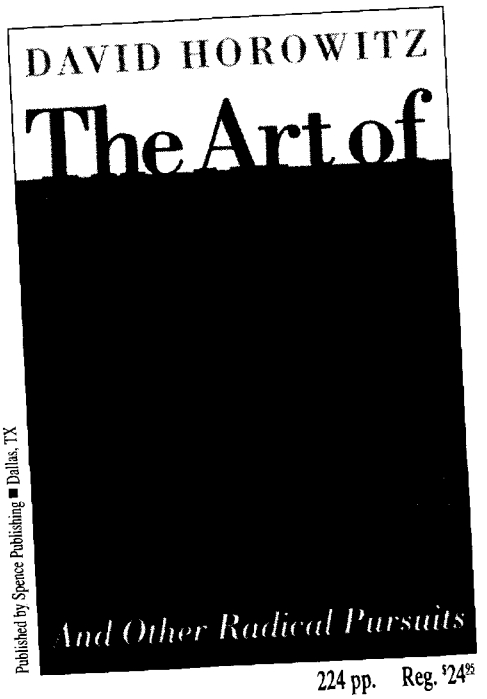

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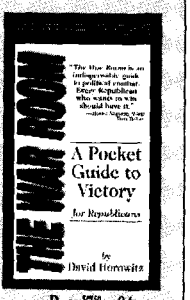

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the campaign trail or giving an interview. These are chores to him, and he performs them like a teenager who's told he can't borrow the car until he's mown the lawn. Talking to a dozen constituents at a Jeep dealership in Alpena, Abraham doesn't smile.

He is running neck-and-neck with a tough challenger. A June poll had Abraham leading Democratic representative Debbie Stabenow 42 percent to 40 percent—red-alert numbers for any incumbent, who can probably count on most late-deciding voters to opt against him in the final days before an election. Despite the recent success of Engler, Michigan is no happy hunting ground for Republicans, let alone conservatives; Abraham could have anticipated a tough contest years ago, and his voting record suggests he's hedged. *National Journal*, for instance, rated him the Senate's eighth most liberal Republican. That's not exactly Jim Jeffords territory, but it's within sight. Abraham has cast a few union-friendly votes—he supported a minimum-wage increase, for instance—and doesn't like to talk about abortion, even though he's reliably pro-life. A recent constituent newsletter cites mushy praise from the *Chicago Tribune*: "Maybe we'll see a softer, gentler GOP, as exemplified by Abraham."

One decision in particular has disappointed some conservatives. Last year, Abraham followed Engler's lead and came out against a school-choice proposal that Michigan voters will decide on this fall. Engler argued that it was polling too poorly to pass and would increase Democratic turnout. Today, Abraham refuses to talk about it. "I've expressed concern," he says. "But my role is not to make the case for or against the initiative." So he won't.

■

Attention to the political concerns of ordinary Michigan voters may be the key to Abraham's comeback.

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The issue that has earned him the most notoriety, however, is immigration. It's the one subject about which he can become animated in conversation. Many pro-immigration conservatives credit Abraham with preventing the national GOP from following the sorry fate of California's Republicans in the wake of Proposition 187, the anti-illegal-alien ballot initiative that arguably saved Pete Wilson's governorship but also turned a whole generation of Hispanics against the party. This, in turn, makes Abraham a villain to restrictionists, whom he confounded in 1995 and 1996 when Congress weighed new limits on immigrant admissions and he was an upstart member of the Judiciary Committee. The Federation for American Immigration Reform has run a vengeful ad campaign against him this year, asking: "Why is Senator Spencer Abraham trying to make it easier for terrorists like Osama bin Laden to export their war of terror to any city street in America?" This was a tactless comment, considering Abraham is an Arab American (his background is Christian Lebanese), and it caused groups like the Michigan Catholic Conference to defend the senator publicly. It also created an opportunity for triangulation: His supporters could say that Abraham may be conservative, but he's no nut-job like the extremists attacking him.

But if he loses, many Republicans may decide that Abraham himself went too far—especially in a state like Michigan,

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where the only voter concern about borders has to do with car traffic on the bridges to Ontario. His vigorous support—in both words and actions—for immigration has won him a fan base outside of normal GOP circles. He's been feted at an awards banquet of the National Council of La Raza, a leading Hispanic group. The invitations to his most recent birthday fundraiser—called "Spence-o de Mayo," even though it falls in June—featured the GOP elephant insignia on an orange sombrero. An Abraham defeat might send conservatives the message that—despite all the happy talk in Philadelphia—they embrace immigration at their peril. The senator insists he's played the issue wisely. "There are a lot of immigrants in Michigan, and a lot of others who have a strong conscience about these issues because they know their family history," he says.

In recent weeks, Abraham has made a more direct effort to connect with Michigan voters. One recent ad has John McCain, who beat Bush in the state primary, extolling Abraham as a "workhorse" who snagged $300 million in federal funding for Michigan roads—an effective ad, but a strange one given that McCain, an anti-pork pol, voted against the bill. Abraham also was on center stage in July, when his bill to suspend gas taxes for 150 days came up for a vote. It lost, but Abraham reaped good press at a time when the Midwest saw fuel prices spike high above the national average. He's been aggressive in criticizing Democratic prescription-drug plans, too.

This attention to the political concerns of ordinary Michigan voters may be the key to Abraham's comeback. New polls show him inching away from Stabenow; on August 29, the *Detroit News* had him ahead, 43 percent to 34 percent. That's still too many uncommitted voters for comfort, but the improvement in recent weeks has energized his supporters.

Win or lose, the lesson for conservatives is that it's important to keep paying close attention to local matters, even when one is developing a national reputation as a party leader. In the meantime, Abraham can only hope his candidacy chugs forward, toward a slim margin of victory in the wee hours of November 8—which, finally, ought to bring his supporters to their feet. **NR**

■ **CULTURE WATCH** ■

Buds for Life

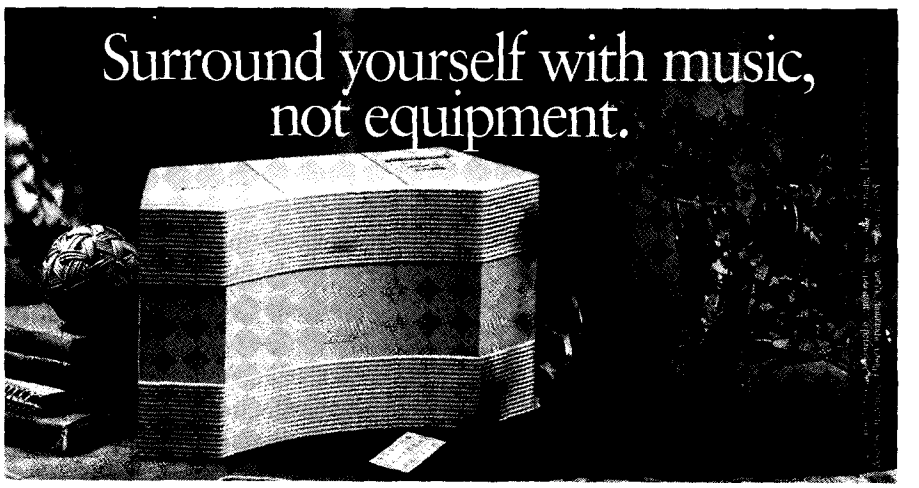
A man and his beer

JONAH GOLDBERG

RUSSELL KIRK, the last great metaphysician of America's Old Testament Right, was fond of repeating H. Stuart Hughes's observation that conservatism is the "negation of ideology." After all, it is the Jacobins and their modern-day heirs who are responsible for the exhausting notion that every act, every purchase, every syllable should carry the full weight of "the cause." So many Leftists, and too many conservatives, believe that the kind of music you listen to—or even the kind of pizza you eat—must carry the full intellectual freight of your ideology. I disagree. I'm proud to say that I dislike Wal-Mart—even though the Left does also. I enjoy Ben & Jerry's ice cream, even though Ben and Jerry are little better than hypocritical tie-dyed Stalinists.

And I love Budweiser, the King of Beers. I admit it without shame or reservation. I love how it tastes. I love it ice-cold, not petri-dish warm like some foreign swill. I prefer it in a bottle. But a can or draught will do just fine if the alternative is some wheaty garbage that tastes like a bran muffin drenched in old tea. Budweiser tastes clean, pure, and crisp. Budweiser is the best conductor of that electrical charge to your brain that comes with that first swallow of beer after a long day. Budweiser does not vary in quality from coast to coast or pole to pole—and is available everywhere in between. Yes, Budweiser—just call him "Bud"—is your loyal friend in any port, at any time. Indeed, Bud's standards are

Mr. Goldberg is editor of National Review Online (www.nationalreview.com).



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so exacting and its convenience so universal that it's the most reliable beverage in the world—soft drinks and water included (cola changes with the culture, and fish still copulate in water, as W. C. Fields pointed out long ago). To paraphrase Homer Simpson—after his wife blew his chance at a million bucks—"Ah, good ol' trustworthy Budweiser. My love for *you* will never die."

Perhaps because my love of Budweiser is so genuine, I am often forced to defend it along ideological lines. I admit I do enjoy going to ludicrous establishments like the Peculiar Pub in New York or the Brickskeller in Washington and asking for a Bud. "A *Budweiser?*" they will ask, as if I had requested a soiled diaper. These places make a killing by selling you some ten-ounce bottle of Bolivian donkey urine for $17, and they are shocked I want a beer I can choke down.

But the disdain for Budweiser is so great throughout the culture that everyone just assumes I am rebelling against some trend or fad (and there are many in the world of beer) by staying loyal to the King. Waiters think I won't notice a burnt steak if I order a Bud, and my more mature confreres assume I have not outgrown the frat-house aesthetic. When my own significant other learned I was writing an appreciation of America's most popular beer, she said ruefully, "I don't agree with what you're doing"—as if I were defending the porn industry or writing speeches for Al Gore. Still, by far the most common reaction from non-Bud loyalists is, "What are you trying to prove?"

This is a microcosmic example of why Kirk's conservatism fell out of favor in the first place. During the Cold War, conservatives could no longer rely on sentiment or Lincoln's formulation of conservatism as a preference for the "old and tried" over the "new and untried." Conservatives had instead to *prove* the merits of democracy and Western civilization against ideologues of all stripes. This task required an ideology of our own.

So, as much as it pains me to be forced to make this case in ideological terms, here goes: Budweiser is, to me, the synthesis of all that is great about America. There is no product—Coca-Cola and the Mustang included—that better tells the story of America.

First, there is the packaging: unapologetic red, white, and blue, with a bald eagle. There is a distinct 19th-century patriotism about a Bud. Today's cans look like they would have gone unnoticed on the shelf 100 years ago (though beer wasn't available in cans until the mid 1930s). Even the forthright promise, made on every container, encourages nostalgia: "This is the famous Budweiser beer. We know of no brand produced by any other brewer which costs so much to brew and age. . . ." How fitting that in this nation, which reveres texts above all other things, our most popular beer boasts a 46-word declaration (not a slogan or motto) for the world to see. Certainly, this archaic form of advertising has been supplemented by "Bud Bowls" and "Whazzup?!" commercials, and yet the company is proud to maintain this link with the past.

And what a past. For all the hoopla about other great dynasties, there is no family that more precisely incarnates the American dream. Consider the symbolism of the Busch saga: In 1857, 18-year-old Adolphus Busch, the second youngest of 22 children, left Germany to seek his fortune in America. He wooed the daughter of Eberhard Anheuser, another immigrant who owned a small brewery that produced an awful beer Busch referred to as *dot schlop*; customers often spat it back over the bar. After taking over the operation, Busch secured the name and quality of "Budweiser"—a beer made in the town of Budweis (in what is now the Czech Republic; the town is today called Ceske Budejovice). Budweiser was trademarked in 1876, America's centennial.

When the Volstead Act banned booze, the country had over 1,500 breweries. When Prohibition was repealed, barely half remained. Anheuser-Busch survived the folly of the progressives by selling off the real estate on which its many saloons had once thrived, and by serving a nonalcoholic bile called Bevo. Under the leadership of Adolphus's grandson, Augustus, the company led the way in popularizing bottled beer. When Augustus's own son was born, the father made sure that August III was given an eyedropper of lager before he was allowed to nurse at the breast, to ensure that beer would continue to be the family's mother's milk.

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There is no product—Coca-Cola and the Mustang included—that better tells the story of America.

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The Busches are similar to other American aristocrats, having their share of suicides, kidnappings, feuds, affairs, "disappearances," and lavish excesses. But what is remarkable about the Busch dynasty is that—unlike almost all other American royalty—the Busches still dance with the lady that brung them. There are no more Vanderbilts in shipping; and when was the last time a Mellon or a Getty breathed soot, or so much as visited a factory?

The Busches, meanwhile, still make beer—almost half of all the beer that America consumes. They are still—despite whatever personal failings they might have—committed to excellence in their work. Further, this icon of multinational capitalism is still revered at home, and thus represents a moral triumph of the free market. In 1953, when August "Gussie" Busch bought the St. Louis Cardinals, he was angry that the Brooklyn Dodgers, equipped with Jackie Robinson, were beating the tar out of everybody else. When he asked his own organization how many blacks the Cardinals were bringing along, he was horrified to hear that the answer was none. "But," he stammered, "we sell beer to *everyone!*" In 1954, the Cardinals had a black first baseman.

To this day, during the seventh-inning stretch at Busch Stadium, they don't play "Take Me out to the Ball Game," but instead the old Bud jingle, "Here Comes the King." The song goes, "When you say Bud, you've said it all"; and while Bud might not *literally* say it all, it certainly says many things about our country—things for which conservatives, especially, should be grateful. **NR**

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■ COVER STORY ■

Al Gore and the 'Wicked Project'

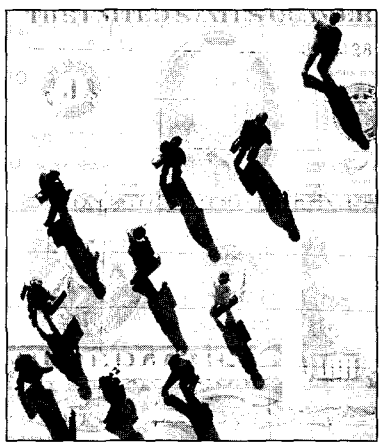
Aboard *The Resentment Special*

MICHAEL NOVAK

IF Al Gore ever gets a campaign bus, he should name it *The Resentment Special.* He is trying to erect his presidency on the shameful act of teaching resentment of "the rich and powerful" to "working families."

But of course, the rich *are* working families. More members of rich families work, by far, than members of poor families. On average, the wealthiest 20 percent of families have two or more full-time workers per family. Only about a third of the bottom 20 percent have even one full-time worker. The more the workers, the higher the income. And at least in America, higher-income families work hard.

Al Gore's hypocrisy is pretty rank, too. His convention was paid for (as was the GOP's) by "the rich and powerful": "the corporations," "the big pharmaceutical companies, oil companies, and tobacco companies." Gore refrained from attacking the big movie and television companies, from whom his presidential patron and past running mate raised $12 million in two days for the Democratic party.



Finally, "the rich and powerful" are the very people of daring, imagination, and talent the country will need if prosperity and invention are to continue as they have, ever since Ronald Reagan's tax cuts took hold in 1982. Who else is going to create the new industries of the future?

Just think of all the industries that didn't even exist when Reagan became president, that now spearhead our economy, thanks to lower capital-gains taxes, incentives, less regulation, and much lower income-tax rates (down from 70 percent in 1981 to 39.6 percent today). Personal computers, faxes, fiber optics, cell phones, the Internet, e-mail, bandwidth communications, superb private mail carriers, biotechnology—it goes on and on.

When Reagan took office, autos were the largest industry. No more. In those days, autos were still mostly mechanical, too, not electronic. As Reagan foresaw, the U.S. economy has grown to be nearly twice the size it was in 1980. He said "America's best days are yet to come." And he was right. The total personal income of the people of America has leapt from $2.3 trillion in 1980 to $7.8 trillion in 1999.

"The rich and powerful" few led the way to those achievements, by the industries, wealth, and jobs they created. Of course, when they started out in pursuit of their dreams, a lot of them were *not* rich and powerful, just ordinary Joes, but restless with ideas. If they are rich and powerful now, it's because they created even greater wealth for others. They didn't get rich alone—our system doesn't work like that. The good fortune of one man comes only if he has brought good fortune to others. The guy who invents the most brilliant new gizmo in the world doesn't get rich if no one else likes or wants his gizmo, and no one buys it. He either gives value to others or he goes bust.

Reagan promised two things in his campaign twenty years ago. He promised that if tax *rates* were lowered, the actual tax *revenues* to the IRS would soar. And they did. And he promised, but a little more sotto voce, that the rich would actually pay larger *amounts* in federal income tax and a larger *share* of all taxes paid. And they did both.

Furthermore, Reagan said that the government would have to learn to live within its means—even with higher revenues from the tax-rate cuts. And it did, after 1994, when the people finally put in a Republican Congress after forty years of tax-and-spend. The budget at last got balanced. Welfare at last got reformed. Kicking and screaming, the most left-wing Democrats were obliged to bow to reality. But without ever even dimly understanding how reality works. Reluctantly. Uncomprehendingly.

Reagan predicted that tax cuts would produce growth so incredible—just think, doubling the whole U.S. economy in under twenty years—that budget deficits would be overcome, with just a little patience. If Tip O'Neill had curtailed merely *the rate of growth of spending*, as Reagan pleaded, the deficits would have been far easier to overpower. The Democrats wouldn't do that. And everything they spent the money on got worse—education, the underclass, inner cities. They didn't only waste the money. They did harm. By 1994, the country had had enough of it.

"Third Way Democrats" tried to learn from their party's

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errors. Without ever admitting to error—being on the left means never having to say you're sorry—the New Democrats adopted Reaganism by another name. That is, they adjusted to reality. But not Al Gore. Al Gore is no Tony Blair. No Third Way for him. It's back to the Second Way. Back to *The Resentment Special.*

YACHTS AND DIET COKES

For Al Gore, alas, hasn't learned the basic economic lessons that even George McGovern finally learned—by going into business for the first time in his life, running a bed-and-breakfast. The regulations and the taxes were awfully wearing and expensive, McGovern found. He hadn't known; hadn't even imagined. He also learned that you can't have employ*ees* without employ*ers*. Democrats in general need to learn that.

It would be a lot easier for rich people to live on accumulated capital than to invest that capital in risky enterprises that make jobs for others. But most of America's rich don't want a useless life, thank God. They prefer the headaches of creating new businesses to *la dolce vita* in the Mediterranean. Even when you catch a rich man on a yacht, it's only on his annual three-week vacation, cut short by an office emergency. The American rich haven't yet learned how to relax.

It is not even making money that fascinates them, but the challenge of proving their mother-in-law wrong. They love doing what others say can't be done. They love doing better than the last guy. They love coming up with new things. They pride themselves on enterprise and imagination. They average close to eighty hours' work a week.

George McGovern learned some respect for these employers, owners, "rich" folks. Al Gore takes buckets of their money, but gives them no respect. His convention speech was the most Marxist tirade I have ever heard an American president or presidential nominee give, in one essential respect. As Kolakowski explains in his three-volume analysis of what went wrong in Marxism (he was the highest-ranking theoretician in the Communist world when he wrote it), the reason Marxism appealed to people all around the world, even where there was no proletariat and no capital, is that it provided a Universal Stencil: *If YOU suffer, THEY caused it. THEY held you back. I will fight for YOU!*

George W. Bush has erred in calling this "class warfare." It is really the stirring of Universal Resentment, even where in Marx's sense there are no "classes." This resentment is the terrible fuel behind the one vice that has destroyed all previous republics—not hatred, not violence, not luxury, not even moral decline, but envy. That is why James Madison in *Federalist* No. 10 spurned the "wicked project" of equality. Envy tears down. Envy would rather punish and even destroy the rich than raise up the poor. Envy doesn't mind keeping the poor poor, or at least fixing them in perpetual dependency. Envy holds others fast in its own predicament. The kind of "solidarity" it preaches is rooted, not in love, but in a most destructive vice: rage against *others*.

How else can one explain the actual effects of the War on Poverty, which immiserated ever increasing legions of the urban poor, until finally something had to stop?

The first Republican majority in forty years forced welfare reform on reluctant Democrats, and dramatically brought down the number of the poor almost instantaneously—just as Republican tax cuts and deregulation after 1982 (too late for McGovern) had dramatically fostered an explosion of new businesses. At long last, it has paid to invest and work, imagine and invent—and hire, hire, hire.

So what is Al Gore's reaction? To overcharge the rich. It is wrong, morally wrong, to take 40 percent of every new dollar someone earns when there is no pressing social need for it, and when in fact one could raise even *more* dollars by lowering the tax rates a little.

Bush, for his part, has repeated the Reagan challenge: If we cut the tax rates of all workers by a small percentage, he is saying, I guarantee you, based on our long experience, that the rich will pay higher amounts of tax dollars than they are now and a larger share of all taxes paid. In 1987, for instance, the top 1 percent of income earners paid 25 percent of all taxes; by 1997, they paid 33 percent (though they brought home 17 percent of all income).

Al Gore doesn't even see that that's what the fundamental argument is about: How to raise *more* tax money from the rich than ever before, by lowering *everyone's* tax *rate* a little. This makes Gore scream. If you lower rates for all, the rich receive a tax break many times larger than the "Diet Coke per week" some poorer families get back.

And why, Al, is that?

The break you get depends on how much tax you pay. If you receive a $10,000 tax break, at a 10 percent reduction, that means you must be paying at least $100,000 in taxes. That's a lot of Diet Coke. Heck, with that down payment, you might as well start a new dealership and hire a few more people! Contrariwise, if you are receiving a tax break of about 60 cents a week, you can't be paying much in federal income taxes. Not much more than $300 per year.

Al Gore is too smart not to know better. He is stirring resentment by taking advantage of the ignorance of some "working families"; and he is doing it for his own gain and their future punishment. Employees need employers who create new jobs. That requires extra capital. Punishing employers is, for employees, suicidal. Pitting employees against corporations mutilates the employees—and harms the nation's economic strength. Economies work by factors of the human spirit, too, including goodwill, cooperation, trust, and mutuality. Al Gore is teaching resentment. There's a steep price for that.

The Marxisant Democrats just can't get their minds around the idea of incentives. They think that cutting taxes will leave behavior just as it was before. Of course, *their* only incentive—their total preoccupation—is political power. They don't want to create new industries and get hold of more capital to create still more new horizons. They want power. Power is a zero-sum game. If Republicans have more power, Democrats have less. So the Marxisants imagine that tax rates are like that, too. Zero sum. Zero effects on future economic activity. It is they who are now the Stupid Party. (Journalists are with them on this. Most describe "static analysis" without giggling, and with the pomposity only ignorance permits.)

Bush, of course, will take more taxes from the rich than

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Gore will. And he will offer greater benefits to "working families," too.

A PRESIDENT FOR ALL

What is money good for? Choice, that's what. Bush will give working families the same educational option that Al Gore and Joe Lieberman have for their own kids: private schools. That's what vouchers are, equalizers. As Rudy Giuliani says, it's immoral to deny poorer families the opportunity to choose private schools when the local public school is cheating their children. Rich people don't stand for it, and working families shouldn't have to, either.

Vouchers are a tax break closer to families' hearts than Gore's "targeted" acts of favoritism to those who do as he commands. Gore treats working families like puppies in training—doling out rewards and punishments on the government's schedule, at the government's pleasure. Bush tries to treat working families like free men and women, making dignified choices for their children's sake. Educational vouchers for poor and working families are a matter of elementary justice.

And how about personal Social Security accounts? Working families don't have these today. They can't invest Social Security funds in the way most suitable to their needs, and they can't will them to heirs of their choice. Worse still, if a worker is single and happens to die before or soon after he turns 65, he will never get a single penny out of all the money he put into his account all those years, and he can't will any of it to loved ones. Uncle Sam is the owner, and Uncle Sam spends what you put in without investing it, and if you die young, he pockets it.

Bush holds that every family in America should have a *nest egg*. When a person dies, he should have an *estate*. The Marxisants care little about this, but almost half the families in the United States don't leave an estate for their children, or only an insignificant one. That's an outrage. Something's wrong with the way we're doing things. And with the impending retirement of the baby boomers, Social Security is facing a crisis.

So Bush, with his eye on the future, wants to give young people a *choice*. Older folks will be safe. They can just go on as before, receiving exactly what the nation promised them, absolutely secure. There's plenty of money in the "trust account" for that. But how about younger people? If Bush has his way, they will be able to set aside one out of every six dollars they put into the system for their own *personal* account, which they will *own*. It will be theirs, not the government's. And if they die before they retire, that nest egg will not be lost, as Social Security now is—it will go to their heirs, to whomever they designate. Their choice. Their money. That's the difference.

America needs "all of its people," as politicians are fond of saying. We need bright people with easy access to lots of capital to invent new industries, and hire more and more people, at better and better pay. Al Gore is only playing demagogue when he attacks the rich and the powerful. He knows it. He's acting. It's a campaign ploy. He can't have working families unless there are employer families, and investor families, and entrepreneurial families.

So here's for the derailing of *The Resentment Special*—and the triumph of something like *The Unity Express*. **NR**

Bountiful Bogeymen

The drug companies—so easy to defend

ROBERT GOLDBERG

In his acceptance speech at the Democratic convention, Al Gore branded biotechnology and pharmaceutical firms enemies of the people. He lumped them in with polluters and tobacco companies as a force that stands in the way of better lives for millions of Americans. Thanks in part to such rhetoric, public contempt for pharmaceutical firms is running high.

But Gore's attack is factually wrong. He says that "most of the valuable research" in medicine is being paid for by taxpayers—when in fact, most of the gains in Americans' health are the result of the work of private-sector drug companies. Far from being an evil force, these firms have produced significant health benefits for millions of Americans at a relatively low cost.

The chief beneficiaries of the recent generation of drugs have been the elderly. The proportion of Medicare beneficiaries age 65 and older with a chronic disability was 21 percent in 1994, down from 24 percent in 1982. One reason is that we now have better drug treatments for osteoporosis, stroke, Parkinson's disease, congestive heart failure, and other diseases. Meanwhile, even as treatments improved, the amount that senior citizens spent on health care (including drugs) as a percentage of income remained unchanged.

But the value of pharmaceutical innovation has been totally ignored by both Gore and George W. Bush in the effort to pander to upper- and middle-class voters who want these life-enabling and lifesaving drugs at bargain-basement prices. Neither Gore nor Bush has pointed out that drug companies have helped create a way to mine the human genome to search for genes that cause and control disease; nor do they show any sign of understanding that this breakthrough—and its continued funding through pharmaceutical profits—is the key to future medical progress.

Those who bash the drug companies omit to mention the very specific ways these companies have improved the lives of millions of Americans.

AIDS. When AIDS was first identified in 1981, there were no medicines available to treat it; today there are more than 50 approved medicines to treat AIDS-related diseases. Combination drug therapy reduced AIDS deaths by more than 70 percent from 1994 to 1997. It has also enabled thousands of people with AIDS and HIV to go back to work and

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get on with their lives. And for all of Gore's bashing of Schering-Plough for the profits it has made on the allergy drug Claritin, it turns out that this relatively small company has created a compound that has already succeeded in blocking HIV viruses in test tubes and offers promise against AIDS.

Stroke. This is the third leading cause of death in the U.S. today, and the most common cause of disability among seniors. The timely use of clot-busting drugs has brought the death rate from stroke down by as much as 50 percent; the next step is to reduce even further the disability associated with stroke. Drug companies, biotech firms, and research institutions are zeroing in on neuroprotective agents, which protect the brain from damage caused by lack of oxygen and by the chemical reactions that occur in the injured brain tissue. The mechanisms and compounds for preventing such trauma are the result of private-sector investment and research.

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Gore is effectively creating an expectation for breakthrough drugs at unreasonably low prices.

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Cholesterol. Today's anti-cholesterol drugs have been shown to reduce the rate of death even in healthy people, but these drugs have their limits because they cannot control the *production* of bad cholesterol; the next generation of cholesterol-fighting drugs will do just that. According to *Science* magazine, researchers have "pinpointed a biological master switch in mice that controls three pathways that work together to both rid the body of excess cholesterol and prevent its absorption from the intestine." The breakthrough basic research is being done by scientists at Howard Hughes Medical Institute, which receives major funding from drug companies.

Wherever you look, the private sector is leading the way. One of Gore's most resounding campaign pledges is to double federal research budgets to find a cure for cancer—but here, too, the real advances are taking place at private companies. Over the last decade, age-adjusted cancer-death rates have declined for the first time. Most future cancer treatments are being funded by pharmaceutical firms in conjunction with biotech companies. Researchers at Millennium Pharmaceuticals have identified the genes that control whether cancerous cells metastasize. Judah Folkman, a Harvard cancer researcher, had received about $5 million to support his research to identify factors that stimulate angiogenesis (the formation of new blood vessels). Folkman wanted to inhibit angiogenesis because cancerous cells help generate new blood vessels in order to grow tumors: Stop angiogenesis and you have a potent anticancer drug. It has taken the combined financial efforts of several drug and biotech companies to replicate Folkman's experiments and produce enough versions of the angiogenesis factors to run clinical trials in animals and humans. (Government scientists, meanwhile, were convinced that Folkman's work was a fluke—because they could not duplicate the angiogenesis effect of his compounds.)

Another important avenue to curing cancer is knowing whether people can tolerate a specific combination of drugs. Pharmacogenetics—the study of the genetic basis for reaction to drugs—will allow companies to develop many medications and their dosages on the basis of each patient's inherited ability to metabolize, eliminate, and respond to specific drugs. Using information about genes involved in processing drugs at the molecular level, drugs and vaccines can be developed to limit side effects, target cancerous cells more precisely, and reduce recovery times.

Chris Sander of Millennium Pharmaceuticals notes that, in general, the new drug science based on genomics will advance drug research and development, cutting pharmaceutical costs in the process. This, in turn, will lead to earlier disease prevention, better health outcomes, and a decline in overall health-care costs. Here too, 99 percent of the research studies are being conducted by private institutions.

On the campaign trail, you won't hear a word about this vast potential; nor that it is being paid for by the 10 percent of health-care spending that is devoted to prescription drugs. In fact, the biggest whiners about drug spending do not seem to be senior citizens (unless they are on the buses to Canada paid for by Big Labor), but HMOs and health plans that are seeing the demand for the fruits of medical progress cutting into their profits.

The rhetoric of the insurance industry's leadership is similar to Gore's: What good are all these drugs if we can't afford them? Why should drug companies charge such high prices if the government does all the research? The reality is that insurance companies and HMOs know that pharmaceuticals are transforming the way medicine is practiced and paid for. Specifically, drugs will be prescribed for people before they are sick, and will be available to people with chronic illnesses who will, as a result, live long and productive lives. Insurance companies and HMOs see a brave new world coming, and they are terrified: They fear that their profit margins will evaporate as their ability to resist consumer demand is overrun by the medical revolution.

Though they are afraid to withhold new drugs directly, Gore is doing their dirty work. He is effectively creating an expectation for breakthrough drugs at unreasonably low prices, and this expectation can only be met through price controls and rationing. Gore's rhetoric has already hurt our ability to sustain medical progress: HMOs and insurance companies are warning consumers they won't have access to medical breakthroughs if the government doesn't do something about drug prices. It's only a matter of time before drug prices, which are a relative bargain compared to the alternatives (expensive hospitalization, chronic illness, or death), are beaten—or regulated—down to the point where our pace of progress slows down to Europe's level. Whether Gore gets elected or not, that will be part of his legacy to the American people; and George W. Bush has yet to expend any political capital to reverse the harm Gore is doing. He should get going. **NR**

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Attack of the Wealth-Eaters

'Like flies to meat they come!'

JOHN DERBYSHIRE

READING Fernand Braudel's *The Wheels of Commerce* recently, I was struck by how oddly dated its many, many references to "capitalism" now seem. I don't mean to be unfair to M. Braudel: The subtitle of his book (published in 1979) is, after all, *Civilization and Capitalism, 15th–18th Century*, and he is striving to describe and explain a phenomenon for which "capitalism" is as good a name as any. It's just that "capitalism" is a word we no longer feel much inclined to use. It's the same with "socialism." With the end of the Cold War, these words have come to seem quaint, like "dirigible" or "nylon." No doubt (we feel) the things they name are still around in one form or another; but we choose not to think of them as we once did, as important features to be differentiated out from the general mess of experience, worthy of our concentrated attention. We have moved on. We are all capitalists now, aren't we?

Well, no. The war against economic liberty may have changed its nature, but it is as intense as ever. Rather like the western front in World War I, it has matured from dramatic movements by great armies (Revolution! Liberation! Welfare State!) to slow attrition: forays by small units probing for weakness, sapping beneath the enemy lines, steady, remorseless shelling. It is still a war, though, to be won or lost. Capitalism needs a sturdy defense, and it should come from the Republican party in the present election.

There are different styles of capitalism in different nations, and I don't see any need to defend anything but our own native variety. In his book *The Myth of the Robber Barons*, Burton Folsom makes a key distinction between *market entrepreneurs*, who build better mousetraps, and *political entrepreneurs*, who persuade governments to grant them licenses and subsidies so that they can dominate the mousetrap business. As Folsom points out—and as Bill Gates has recently learned—above the level of petty commerce, any entrepreneur requires some minimum of political skills; yet the distinction is still a good one, and points up the differences in the way capitalism is practiced in various nations. In Asia, for example, every entrepreneur operating above the street-trader level is a political entrepreneur, if not an actual politician; in South America, he is not infrequently a gangster to boot. In France, he had better have been to the right university; in Germany, he must solicit and maintain the approval of existing business leaders. The United States is uniquely hospitable to the true market entrepreneur, not requiring him to possess any particular political, social, or educational qualifications at all. This is the nation that has come closest to uncoupling the relationship between power and money. The thing can never be done completely, of course; I say only that we have come closest.

This openness, this ease of access to entrepreneurial success, is one of the antibodies that have kept the United States immune from doctrinaire socialism. When the path to wealth is so unobstructed, people feel less resentful of the wealthy, since wealth is a condition that they or their children can reasonably aspire to. Americans living outside the everyday world of wages and profits sometimes do not grasp this. Following the success of his Sergeant Bilko TV show, in which he played a U.S. Army noncom with a gift for gaming the system, the late Phil Silvers tried a new format. He launched a show in which he was a factory foreman, forever scheming to outwit his boss. The show was a massive flop because, as Silvers ruefully conceded in his autobiography, Americans regard the owner of a factory as an underdog, struggling for success against obstreperous unions and economic factors beyond his control. They did not care to see an entrepreneur made a fool of by his employees. And this was in 1963, when only one in ten Americans owned any stocks. Today half of us do; are we *less* sympathetic to private enterprise now?

■

Capitalism needs a sturdy defense, and it should come from the Republican party in the present election.

■

This immunity from the socialist virus has kept American capitalism relatively pure, with less political control, less regulation, less interference from politicians. A businessman from mainland China recently explained to me how things go nowadays in the Middle Kingdom: "So long as your business is below a certain size, you're pretty much left alone. But when you get big enough to attract the attention of the authorities, they soon come knocking on your door with their hands out. *Like flies to meat they come!*" While not entirely free of this form of parasitism—the relationship between Tyson Foods and a certain governor of Arkansas comes to mind—the economic scene in America is freer than in any other significant nation.

THE FACES OF SUCCESS

Because American capitalism is relatively pure, it is exceptionally successful. I do not need to advertise the tremendous economic might of this country, or the fact that this wealth is entirely a product of private enterprise. General Electric, the most profitable company in the world, is American. So are four and a half of the five biggest companies by revenue: GM, Wal-Mart, Exxon Mobil, Ford, DaimlerChrysler (this last is half German). Now, I would not claim that these are all paragons of entrepreneurial vigor. I have spent much of my

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adult life working in the offices of large corporations, and I am well aware that bureaucratic sclerosis is by no means a phenomenon found only in the public sector. Still, all these companies are subject to the disciplines of the market; all understand that they must struggle constantly against their internal inefficiencies; and all depend ultimately for their revenues on an appreciation of what people want, at a price people are willing to pay. Furthermore, all understand that with success comes noblesse oblige; all devote some part of their profits to pro bono efforts in education, the arts, and social improvement.

The relative purity of American capitalism also has some negative consequences, notably inequality. But Americans tolerate what inequality they have with remarkably little grumbling, understanding, at some level, that it is the price they must pay for their extraordinary liberties and opportunities. There is less class resentment here than anywhere else on earth. There *is* a market—an electoral market, I mean—for class warfare in the United States, but not a large one, certainly not one that can be turned into a mass movement.

And so the enemy probes, and saps, and shells. Here is Al Gore accepting his party's nomination in Los Angeles last month:

> So often, powerful forces and powerful interests stand in your way . . . I've been there in the fight against the big polluters . . . It's just wrong to have life-and-death medical decisions made by bean-counters at HMOs who don't have a license to practice medicine . . . Big Tobacco, Big Oil, the big polluters, the pharmaceutical companies, the HMOs—sometimes you have to be willing to stand up and say no . . .

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—Vanity Fair

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This is, as the vice president probably knows, an appeal to economic illiteracy. Big Oil? When I buy a gallon of gas, 5 to 7 cents of what I pay ends up as profits to the oil company. (Local and federal taxes, by contrast, average 48 cents.) If "Big Oil" were ordered to reduce its profit margins to zero, would I notice the difference? "Big polluters": The degree of pollution people are willing to endure in return for economic progress differs from place to place. In the Third World it is very high indeed; in Texas it is higher than in Vermont. Are the people no longer to have any say in this matter?

And those "bean-counters at HMOs": Are decisions about medical treatment to be taken without any input from accountants? If my doctor recommends that I undergo a $2 million medical procedure, am I to have that procedure by right, regardless of my, or my insurer's, ability to pay? No doubt the laws of supply and demand seem particularly callous in the context of health care; but health care involves payment for goods and services and cannot be insulated from economic reality. Attempts to so insulate it get you something like Britain's National Health Service, with its years-long waiting lists for quite ordinary procedures, and its hospitals run for the benefit not of patients or even of doctors, but of truculent porters' unions.

What Gore is doing here is probing—picking on industries against which public indignation can easily be turned, then bringing them down like stags pursued by baying hounds. "Big Tobacco" already knows all about this; the firearms industry is beginning to find out. It would be some consolation to think that these picking-off expeditions will end with industries whose products can cause harm; but that would be to underestimate the ingenuity of the Left. Asking for an inch, then taking a mile, is something they are awfully good at. The campaign to encourage a proper and decent tolerance toward homosexuals became, in the twinkling of an eye, a movement to teach the techniques of sodomy to nine-year-olds in public schools. Just so, the demonizing of private enterprise will not end with manufacturers of cigarettes and guns. *Powerful forces and powerful interests stand in your way* . . . Translation: Your life could be better, fairer, easier, healthier if only those "forces" and "interests" were not sucking up the wealth of the country for themselves. Beneath the veneer of humility and compassion, behind the perfunctory gesture of respect for the private sector (which "drives our economic growth," said Al Gore) is our old pal Socialism. Gore again: "The power should be in your hands. The future should belong to everyone in this land." Cue Woody Guthrie.

THE TECHNIQUES OF THIS WARFARE

In Congress the Corps of Engineers is busily sapping away. Sen. Tom Harkin's "Fair Pay Act" and Sen. Tom Daschle's "Paycheck Fairness Act" are naked, unapologetic attempts to bring back wage controls, a thing not seriously attempted in this country since World War II. It is unlikely that either measure will become law in this Congress; but the fact that such things are being proposed at all, and are getting the support of panjandrums like Sen. Ted Kennedy, shows how far the Left now believes it can go. (Clinton has in fact gone further: At an interview with the Seattle press last fall, on the opening day of the WTO meeting, he called for a *global* minimum wage.)

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Meanwhile, behind these legislative tunnelers, the artillery is laying down a steady barrage: the trial lawyers, tirelessly seeking out every vulnerability in every business sector, the regulators and "diversity" ideologues—the David Kesslers and Bill Lann Lees—the environmentalists and not-in-my-backyard irregulars, the Hollywood airheads. *Like flies to meat they come.* And they all come equipped with seductive arguments: *You don't* like *pollution, do you?* But the end of all their schemes, if realized, will not be a cleaner society, or a fairer or healthier one, or a more efficient one. It will be a society orientalized, in which businessmen will know that the larger part of their time and energy must be given over to currying political favor, a society in which, as the Chinese say, "The rulers can burn whole mountains, but the common people dare not light a lantern."

How should Republicans counterattack? How best to speak out for economic freedom against those who wish to destroy it? The starting point must be some ground of faith that most citizens understand, or can easily be reminded of, the thing that Phil Silvers did not know: that running a business, small or large, is a desperate, daily fight for survival, for market share, for incremental increases in productivity and share value. Time spent dealing with regulators, lawyers, tax-gatherers, and rent-seekers is time taken away from that fight. Advancing from that ground, Republicans can:

1) Make the point that while Democrats like Gore pay occasional lip service to the private sector, very few of them—and even fewer of the legions of schoolteachers, ambulance-chasers, and municipal bureaucrats who make up their activist base—have any actual experience of it or of its disciplines.

2) Remind America that the foot soldiers of the Democratic party, those who gathered at Los Angeles last month, are overwhelmingly consumers of the national wealth, not creators of it. There is no need to be obnoxious about this. The nation needs a public sector, and God bless them every one; but very few of those who are loudest in support of the Democrats have contributed one red cent to the great national wealth of which Clinton and Gore so love to boast. Very much the contrary: On balance, the Democrats are, by a wide margin, the party of wealth-eaters, not wealth-creators.

3) Try to introduce the phrase "killing the goose that lays the golden eggs" at every reasonable opportunity.

4) Attack the concept of rule by intellectualized public-sector types like Gore. One of the much-underestimated factors in American political life is public resentment of arrogant credentialed elites, and of their faith that, since they are by definition the smartest people, there is not much need for them to consult with the dull-witted masses.

5) Emphasize the very respectable history of Republicans in Congress these past eight years, reining in Clinton and Gore's appetite for public money and social engineering.

Economic liberty is not a side effect of our social system; it is the foundation of it. Private enterprise is only private property at large. As Calvin Coolidge pointed out: "Ultimately, property rights and personal rights are the same thing." Most Americans know this in their hearts; the great economic success of their country proves it to them. It is up to us, the party of capitalism, to remind them of it. **NR**

As Goes California . . .

Still the leader—ominously so

JOHN O'SULLIVAN

WHEN Fred Barnes published his article "Why California Doesn't Matter" in the July 31 *Weekly Standard*, he seemed to be arguing a straightforward thesis: that California was no longer a significant influence on American politics because it was no longer a leading indicator of the political future. In the past California had decided presidential elections, as when its votes gave Richard Nixon his squeaker victory in 1968, and pioneered voter rebellions, as when Proposition 13 sparked the tax revolt of the late 1970s. But that was all over now. The Golden State had become too eccentric politically, too remote from national trends, even too Democratic, to be a reliable weathervane in politics. It was the wave of the past.

Barnes's article attracted a great deal of attention. It received a liberal rejoinder, contesting both halves of its thesis, from Peter Schrag, who pointed out in the *Sacramento Bee* that the state containing both Hollywood and Silicon Valley could hardly be called politically irrelevant. It provoked skeptical responses in *The Weekly Standard*'s correspondence section from, among others, Ward Connerly, who defended his Proposition 209—which prohibited race and gender preferences—against Barnes, who had dismissed its national impact. And because Barnes is both a firm conservative and a fair-minded professional journalist, the article aroused particular interest on the right. Ron Unz, the Silicon Valley millionaire who funded Proposition 227 (the measure that overturned bilingual education in California), and human-biodiversity guru Steve Sailer both made essentially the same criticism: that, in Unz's words, Barnes's article had put "a positive spin on the near-complete collapse of the California Republican party."

For the most part, these reactions were provoked by the sheer novelty of Barnes's thesis; we are so used to hearing California discussed as the lodestar of American politics that it was refreshing to hear it roundly dismissed as unimportant. The article was therefore taken with a certain anti-California schadenfreude by many readers. But there was more to it than that. The more one read it, the more it seemed to be written in a sort of code. Though Barnes is usually a writer of exemplary directness, he seemed here to be saying both less and more than he meant. Signs pointed readers in one direction, but when they followed them, they ended up at the other end of town. It was almost as if Barnes were planting forbidden thoughts in the heads of his readers by the subtle device of not mentioning them.

This roundabout odyssey began with the arguments

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employed to prove that California was no longer a significant political influence on the rest of America. Almost every one of them was either a transparent irrelevancy or plainly false. Thus, Barnes pointed out that the last time California's votes had decided a presidential election was in 1968. True enough—but what of it? The reason—namely, that all recent elections have been won by margins too large for any single state to make a difference—tells us nothing at all about California. Similarly, he suggests that California by itself is unlikely to hand over the House of Representatives to the Democrats in November. But the reason he adduces is that California will likely split its votes, or that Democratic victories there will be offset by losses elsewhere. Again, so what? The same could be said of any state; but California is the only state we can now imagine swinging the House to the Democrats by virtue of its votes alone. And, third, he maintains that California's referenda are no longer genuine populist initiatives that inspire national trends. But the reasons he gives are that Proposition 209 has not persuaded George W. Bush to end race and gender preferences (when, surely, the more important evidence is that it sparked a similar victory in Washington State and was kept off the ballot in Florida only by the courts) and that Proposition 187 has been vetoed by the courts (when the vetoing by courts of legislation is itself the single biggest trend in American politics).

Of course, none of these arguments addresses the basic facts of California's political life. As Peter Schrag pointed out, California has 12 percent of America's population and one-fifth of the electoral votes needed to become president; by the 2002 election, it will likely have 54 House seats as a result of a redistricting controlled by Democrats. Such a state would be politically significant even if all its inhabitants were to vote for the rump Reform party's John Hagelin in the hope of being taught how to fly (a contingency that cannot be completely ruled out).

Now, Barnes is not a stupid man. He must be as aware as his readers that his arguments about California prove nothing more than that he possesses a greater verbal agility than the average political commentator. So it is of some interest when he passes from notably failing to demonstrate that California is no longer important to proving conclusively that it is atypical. He writes: "By the late 1990s . . . California was more Democratic, more pro-President Clinton, and more pro-abortion than the rest of America. Its population was more Hispanic and Asian. Its business community was more culturally liberal." His explanation of these changes is also persuasive—indeed, undeniable. They are produced by dramatic demographic changes—"notably the doubling of the Latino electorate . . . The new Latino voters tend to be younger, less likely to speak English, and monolithically Democratic." The result of the new ethnic composition of the electorate is that only one statewide office is at present held by a Republican.

At this point, the attentive reader may wonder how on earth this happened. How did the ethnic composition of California change so dramatically in the space of a dozen years that it turned the Golden State from a solid link in the "Republican lock" on the electoral college into a safe house for recidivist liberal Democrats? Barnes offers no assistance on this question. One is left to imagine that, in a scene reminiscent of the movie *Watermelon Man*, a lot of Anglo suburbanites woke up one morning to discover that they could read *Don Quixote* in the original.

THE TRANSFORMING FACTOR

The missing link in Barnes's argument is, of course, immigration. California's changing ethnic makeup can be traced directly to large-scale immigration, legal and illegal. The state has imported, in particular, two groups: largely unskilled Mexican immigrants and mainly high-skilled Asian immigrants—the first to be cooks, gardeners, janitors, and low-paid workers, the second to provide Silicon Valley with medium-paid programmers. These new arrivals have transformed California's political identity. It is plain (to me, at least) that Barnes intended his readers to leap to this conclusion. The gap in his argument is too glaring to be missed, especially since the other signs of California's decline to which he points—the deterioration in social services, the population pressure on the environment, and the flight of white and black Californians to the hinterland—are also the direct results of very high levels of immigration.

But the missing link that explains California's transformation also undermines Barnes's central argument that the state no longer foretells America's future. For immigration is transforming America as a whole, not simply California. The other major immigrant-receiving states are New York, Illinois, Florida, Texas, and New Jersey—coincidentally, the states with the largest numbers of electoral votes. And if current policies continue, the Census Bureau estimates (and these are its "middle series" estimates, not the most dramatic ones available) that the ethnic makeup of America in 2050 will be very similar to that of the Golden State today. In particular, non-Hispanic whites will become a minority nationwide in about 2055—just as they became a minority in California this year.

How will that new American population vote? As it happens, that question has been answered before in NATIONAL REVIEW. In our June 16, 1997, issue, Peter Brimelow and Ed Rubenstein took the 1988 election, in which George Bush obtained 53 percent of the popular vote, and estimated what the Republican percentage would be in future elections if all the ethnic groups were to vote as they did in 1988 but in an electorate gradually changing its ethnic composition in line with immigration-driven Census Bureau projections. The results are sobering: The GOP wins its last election in 2004, after which it goes steadily into an ever-deeper electoral deficit. My own article of December 23, 1996, applied the same technique to past elections. An America with the ethnic composition forecast for 2050 would have voted for the Democratic presidential candidate in every election since 1968, with the sole exception of 1972. Even in Reagan's landslide year of 1984, the Democrat would have won 52 percent of the popular vote.

So the lesson of Barnes's article, rightly interpreted, is not that California is no longer significant because it no longer foretells America's political future, but quite the opposite: namely, that because California foretells a future of Democratic political hegemony for America, the state has to be dismissed as insignificant. And this latter lesson is so manifestly nonsensical that Barnes can be advancing it only to

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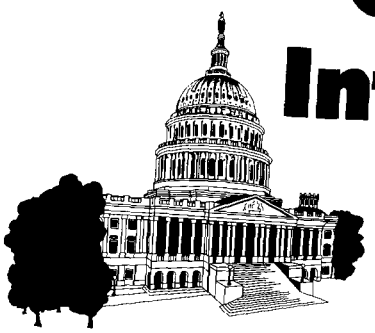

Concerning US Military Intervention in Colombia:

Remarks by Senator Slade Gorton, R-WA on June 21, 2000,

"Mr. President, the capacity of this body for self-delusion seems to this Senator to be unlimited . . .

"This bill includes almost $1 billion for an entirely new, and almost totally military, involvement in a civil war in Latin America, without the slightest promise that our intervention will be a success, and it does it in a totally backward fashion.

"The very committee report that recommends spending this almost $1 billion says that the committee 'has grave reservations regarding the administration's ability to effectively manage the use of these resources to achieve the expected results' . . .

"This bill says let's get in a war now and justify it later . . .

"It just seems impossible to me to believe that in the absence of the debate of the whole country, with all of the lessons we must have learned not just in this administration, but in previous administrations, about how easy it is to get in and how hard it is to get out, we will blithely make this downpayment — and this is a downpayment only . . .

"Next year, maybe we will need a lot more money if they are not doing very well down there. And how much of the equipment is going to end up in the hands of rebels by sale or capture or otherwise? We have no way of controlling that without a presence on the ground.

"I urge this body to say . . . we are not going to do this until you first come to us with a formal overall plan with a beginning, middle, and an end, and a plan for how we are going to achieve our goals. Get the authority first and then fund it. It is 10 times better for this society to put that $700 million on our debt and not get in a civil war in South America. That is what this debate is all about — not that we don't like the Colombians or that we don't want them to be successful, but we don't want a part of their war."

Is the "War on Drugs" Getting Us In a Real War in Colombia?

For more information visit: www.csdp.org. Common Sense for Drug Policy Kevin B. Zeese, President
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draw attention to perils that he prudently forbears to name.

Some conservatives have seen this future and proposed actions to avert it. A few have argued both for reducing the level of legal immigration and for changing its rules so that more of the reduced total of immigrants enter the U.S. as skilled workers who will be more likely to prosper and become Republicans in short order. But these are "controversial" thoughts, and in general the Republican establishment has resolved not to think them. Most GOP strategists have sought an approach compatible with support for continued high levels of unskilled immigration.

THE UNZ CHIMERA

Ron Unz has been the most creative in arguing this case, which goes roughly as follows: Hispanic immigrants are hard-working and enterprising people, also socially conservative, and thus natural Republicans. If in recent years in California they have voted heavily Democratic, that is because in 1994 Gov. Pete Wilson and the grass-roots organizers of Proposition 187 (which prohibited the use of non-emergency social services by illegal aliens) fought a bitter anti-immigrant campaign. That saddled the California GOP with a reputation of hostility to Hispanic-Americans. As a result, Latino support for the GOP has fallen to the low 20s in polls.

Instead of this disastrous policy, the argument continues, we need to combine support for immigration with a strong assimilationist policy that would reject official bilingualism, preferences, multiculturalism, etc. We might then win the Latino vote.

This is a comforting explanation, but it has a number of flaws.

One. There is nothing inherently Republican about hard work and enterprise. And most Latino immigrants in California are poor people. Their economic interests push them toward the party most associated with labor unions, the welfare state, health and safety regulation, etc.—namely, the Democrats.

Two. Though Hispanic immigrants come usually from Catholic cultures, that may not be the best predictor of how they will behave in the liberal climate of the U.S. Thus, the illegitimacy rate among Hispanics in California is 40.5 percent—compared with 32.8 percent for all races there. As for abortion, Hispanics are approximately 11 percent of the U.S. population but account for 22 percent of all abortions. And, as we have seen with other Americans, moral opinion tends to follow moral behavior rather than the other way round. So the likelihood is that Hispanics will become less conservative morally the longer they live in the U.S.

Three. Even supposing that Hispanics continue to hold moral views similar to those of the Religious Right, that will not necessarily drive them into the GOP column. Black Americans are more conservative morally than whites, but they consistently vote for the most liberal candidates. In effect, their conservative political values are outweighed by appeals to their racial loyalty. Latinos can be similarly swayed. Ron Unz experienced this in the battle for his own Proposition 227 opposing bilingual education. Although 227 had led consistently in the polls, a campaign that demonized it as anti-Hispanic ensured that it received only 40 percent of Latino votes when its statewide total was over 60 percent.

Four. For these reasons, the Hispanic vote in California is a naturally Democratic one. And mass immigration tends to make it more so in two ways. First, given that new Latino immigrants tend to be overwhelmingly Democratic, their arrival cancels out any shift to the right by prospering and assimilated Hispanics already here. Second, they slow down the rate of Hispanic assimilation—and thus the rate of switching to the GOP—because they strengthen the cultural separateness of Hispanics by, for instance, making it less necessary to learn English in order to work or make friends.

Five. As a consequence, the GOP's share of the Latino vote has indeed been on a declining path. But how responsible is Pete Wilson or Proposition 187 for this? Wilson himself received 23 percent of the Hispanic vote in 1994—a better performance than that of Dan Lungren, who received only 17 percent of Latinos in 1998 after running a campaign that stressed his support for immigration and his Catholic sympathy for Hispanic values. It is highly implausible that Latino voters would punish Lungren more harshly than Wilson for Wilson's sins.

In short, the Unz theory makes Pete Wilson the scapegoat for a secular Republican decline that is the result of large social forces, including mass immigration. By doing so, it encourages us to do little or nothing about such forces. Indeed, Unz himself has a policy prescription—combining support for mass immigration with assimilationist social policies—that treats these forces as amenable to a good sermon.

Yet, as Steve Sailer has pointed out, one very important verdict is already in on the immigration/assimilation mix: The professional politicians themselves shrink from it. When did you last hear a Republican politician with hopes of higher office denounce quotas, official bilingualism, or the multicultural rewriting of American history? None of this should surprise a cold observer of the political game. The politicians are simply responding to the market—or to what they perceive to be the electorate of the future. They assume that America will go the way of California. And they calculate that the only way for Republicans to prosper is to make the same kind of appeal the Democrats are making.

This strategy ignores the fact that the Hispanic voters who lean to the GOP are the very ones who respond to an assimilationist message. Though they may be a minority of all Latinos, they are nonetheless the Latino Republican base. Embracing a multiculturalist message leaves them feeling abandoned, resentful, and finally apathetic. And since that policy also depresses GOP support among whites, the net effect is to drive down the overall GOP vote.

How do we prevent America from "tipping" into a Democratic hegemony as California has done? The answer is simple: Reduce immigration to a level at which the new arrivals can be assimilated comfortably into an American identity. The more easily they feel themselves to be Americans, the more likely they are to vote Republican—just as the Irish, the Poles, and the Italians gradually switched to the GOP during a period when immigration was held to the low levels that dry up ethnic separatism.

This strategy is simple, but not easy: It requires courage, eloquence, and a grasp of principle. **NR**

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DICK MORRIS COMMUNICATIONS

Dear Mr. Vice President:

What an achievement! Honestly, it's extremely difficult for me to believe that you've accomplished all that you have—and according to my private polling data, you have eliminated Gov. Bush's lead!—without my help.

That said, if you'll permit me, sir, let me enumerate the ways in which this week's excellent tidings—and they are excellent! How did you do it without me?—can disappear like so much iced tea, and in much the same way. What you need, my friend—and I pay you the highest compliment I can when I use the word "friend"—is some advice, from me.

First: In a word, go negative. What I mean is, go negative-er! Your opponent has shown his stripes repeatedly—he will go negative, distort your record, twist your words, and relentlessly attack your proposals. DO NOT LET HIM GET AWAY WITH THIS! Look what he did to his primary opponent, how he attacked his record on health care. Let me roll up my sleeves and help you with this.

Second: Attack his ludicrous health-care proposals. Call them what they are: another boondoggle aimed at giving the rich yet another entitlement, yet still leaving hundreds of thousands of Americans—"working families™"—uninsured, and exposing our nation's elderly—the "greatest generation™"—to bankruptcy as they try in vain to pay for their prescription drugs.

(Please note that the phrases "working families™" and "greatest generation™" are trademarked—owned in entirety by Dick Morris Communications, Inc. Use of same requires payment of a license fee.)

Third: Circulate™! Triangulation™ is yesterday's strategy. Don't fight the last war. The truth is, you don't want to be a sharp point between two lines. You want to be big, round, and enveloping. A circle can be a hug (great for the minivan moms), a pizza (working families™ love that one), or a senior citizen's daily dose of prescription-strength Motrin. Bounce into the White House with my brand-new strategy: Circulation™!

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Your true friend,

Dick Morris

P.S.: Call me! The first couple of hours can be on the house!

DICK MORRIS COMMUNICATIONS

Dear Governor:

Sir! Do not despair!

I am here, Governor, and I am ready to help because, like you, I believe deeply that it's time to restore dignity and honor to the office of the presidency.

I'm impressed by your style, your honesty, your shoot-from-the-hip attitude. I agree with your policy prescriptions, your promise to rebuild the military, and your perceptive analysis of Adam Clymer, who has taken a potshot or two at yours truly. I want to be on the strategy team. Herewith, my thoughts—some gratis advice, to assure you of my bona fides.

First: In a word, go negative. What I mean is, go negative-er! Your opponent has shown his stripes repeatedly—he will go negative, distort your record, twist your words, and relentlessly attack your proposals. DO NOT LET HIM GET AWAY WITH THIS! Look what he did to his primary opponent, how he attacked his record on health care. Let me roll up my sleeves and help you with this.

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HELP!!!!

THE TIMING OF THIS WHITEWATER GRAND JURY LEAK IS POLITICS AT ITS WORST. IT VALIDATES OUR BELIEF IN A VAST RIGHT-WING CONSPIRACY AND PROVES THERE IS NO MERIT TO THIS CASE. IT IS "ANOTHER REPUBLICAN DIRTY TRICK" AND REVEALS THAT THIS IS NOTHING BUT A POLITICAL WITCH HUNT!!!
UH, MR. PRESIDENT, IT WAS A JUDGE WHO IS A DEMOCRATIC APPOINTEE.
Never mind.

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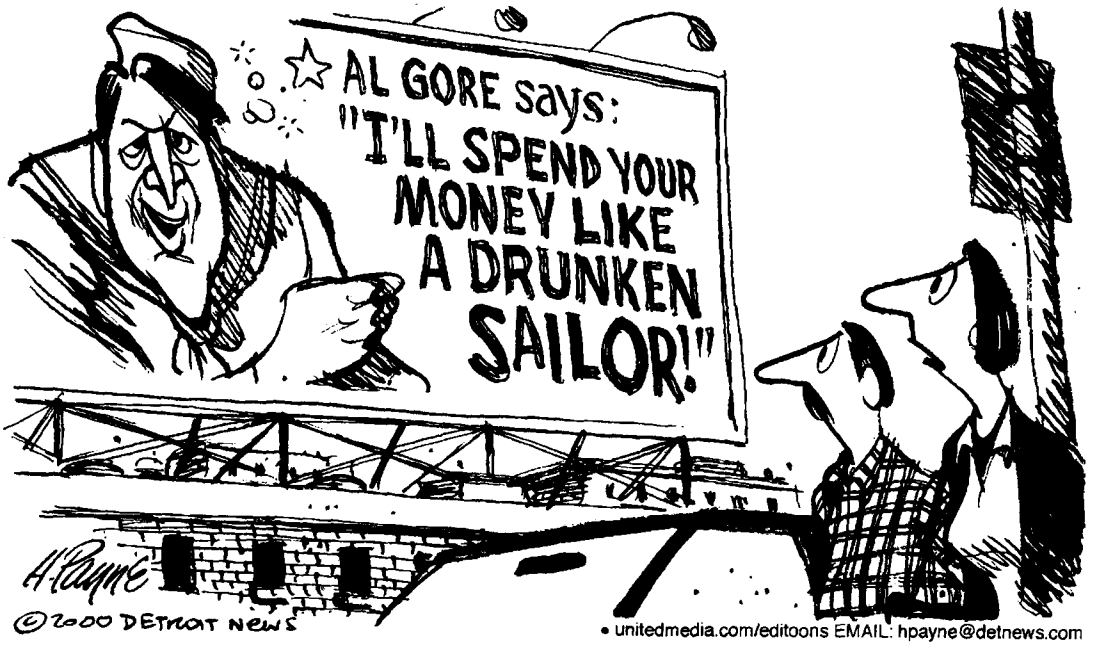
"If I were Little Red Riding Hood, I'd mace the wolf and call 911."

Working Families

Gore's sounding like Samuel Gompers
When Mellon and Frick carried on,
John D. gave out dimes at a golf club
And Morgan behaved like a don.
Somebody tell Al, when the markets
Commence their diurnal parades,
Joe Sixpack warms up his computer,
Sips coffee from Starbucks, and trades.

—W. H. von Dreele



"WELL... IT DOES LOOSEN HIS STIFF IMAGE."

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The Kennedy Complex

MICHAEL KNOX BERAN

Robert Kennedy: His Life, by Evan Thomas (Simon & Schuster, 509 pp., $28)

OURS is an age preoccupied by the notion of paradox in human character. The lives of simple, forthright people interest us only when enterprising writers are able to discover the incriminating clue, the louche confession, the suitably disguised signal from the hidden soul that it is, despite appearances, tormented. Biographer Edmund Morris seems to have been driven to despair because he was unable to uncover in Ronald Reagan any of those concealed intricacies of motive and desire that excite the interest of contemporary readers. Bookstore shelves are heavy with analyses of complicated presidential minds like LBJ's, Nixon's, and Teddy Roosevelt's; relatively straightforward figures like Eisenhower and Reagan command a more slender literary tribute.

It is therefore easy to understand why, in recent years, biographers have rediscovered Robert F. Kennedy, whose appeal has come to rest, at least in part, on his reputation for tortured complexity. His father called him the "runt" of Rose's litter, yet he went on to prove to a skeptical family that he was at least as talented as his older brothers. The son closest to Rose—the pious altar boy who absorbed something of his mother's religious instinct—was at the same time desperately eager to please Dad, even though in doing so he was forced to suppress his gentler qualities and make the paternal code of masculine toughness his own.

Mr. Beran is the author of *The Last Patrician: Bobby Kennedy and the End of American Aristocracy.*

RFK by Roman Genn

As Kennedy grew older the contradictions multiplied. The Cold Warrior became a critic of the Vietnam War; the apprentice to Joe McCarthy became an admirer of Che Guevara; the cold-eyed White House *consigliere* grew his hair long and spoke constantly of the need for compassion. He was, of course, like many of the Kennedys, something of an actor, and there was undoubtedly a theatrical element in his gestures of complexity. No Clintonian lip-biting, to be sure. But in the midst of a cheering multitude a look of pain sometimes crossed his face: The weak smile, the slightly narrowed eyes, seemed those of a man who, in the midst of his own triumphs, was saddened by the sight of so much hopefulness concentrated on a vessel as imperfect as he knew himself to be.

In his new biography of Kennedy, Evan Thomas documents these contradictions without enthusiasm. It is as though he were repeating a litany he knows has been recited once too often, and as a study of character his book does not supersede Arthur Schlesinger's authoritative *Robert Kennedy and His Times*. Schlesinger's mannered prose, with its high literary finish, proved a supple instrument with which to probe the recesses of Kennedy's character. Thomas, by contrast, excels at depicting the way Kennedy wielded power. An editor at *Newsweek*, Thomas is in many ways the ideal chronicler of Kennedy as power-junkie. In *The Wise Men*, written with Walter Isaacson, Thomas described how men like Dean Acheson and George F. Kennan formulated the strategies America used to fight the Cold War. In *The Very Best Men* he explored the world of the CIA. In the process, he developed a nuanced understanding of the way Washington works—and in many cases fails to work. Thomas's new book is, accordingly, less the comprehensive portrait suggested by its title than a narrower study of the lessons of power, as exercised by a man bred for public life in the very apogee of postwar American liberalism.

Kennedy was just 35 when his brother made him his attorney general and de facto prime minister, and nothing in his previous experience of politics—which was limited to investigative work for Senate committees and managing his brother's campaigns—prepared him for his new authority. Thomas challenges the notion that the Kennedy administration amounted to a series of discrete dramatic episodes—the Bay of Pigs, the Missile Crisis—offset by a sometimes cautious but still noble pursuit of idealistic causes such as civil rights for blacks. He instead depicts the Kennedys as fighting a series of closely interrelated battles, and demonstrates how surprisingly little room they had to maneuver: Movement on any one front threatened to upset the precarious balances that prevailed on half a dozen others. The push for civil rights, for example, was complicated by the Ken-

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nedys' reluctance to irritate congressional barons and draw attention to American domestic problems at a time when a semblance of national unity was needed to fight the Cold War. A CIA plan to use the Mafia to "get rid of Castro" complicated Robert Kennedy's efforts to crack down on organized crime.

Some of the Kennedys' problems were of their own making. J. Edgar Hoover's knowledge of the president's dalliances freed the FBI director to rule his bureau as a semi-independent fiefdom—and enabled him to frustrate the Kennedys' intentions in a number of areas. Thomas's extensive interviews with those who staffed the New Frontier bureaucracies demonstrate, too, that Robert Kennedy was a less effective manager than has often been supposed. "I wish so very much I had two Bobbies," Thomas quotes President Kennedy saying near the end of his life; in fact, as Thomas makes clear, by the fall of 1963 the attorney general was doing the work of at least two Bobbies and was spread dangerously thin. Running from crisis to crisis, Kennedy would show up at meetings of startled administrators and angrily demand action, then storm off to the next brushfire, leaving mayhem and misunderstood mandates in his wake.

"They used to sail with road maps, not even proper charts," Douglas Dillon, JFK's treasury secretary, sputtered of the Kennedys' boating habits. They approached the task of governing in much the same way, relying not, as impressed outsiders believed, on careful planning and organization (the "well-oiled Kennedy machine") but on hastily improvised responses. They avoided established lines of command when they could use informal back channels instead.

Like Garry Wills in *The Kennedy Imprisonment*, Thomas shows that this loosely choreographed leadership style, so successfully applied to the business of winning elections, was unequal to the task of administering an empire. A light managerial touch is sometimes a good thing—but not when it allows important deliberations, like those of ExCom during the Missile Crisis, to degenerate into what Acheson called a "floating crap game." The bureaucracies over which the Kennedys presided were vast and frequently unresponsive, and the ponderous pashas who ruled these domains were unimpressed by the Kennedys' charm and insensible to their threats. The possibility of nuclear war limited options in foreign policy just as political realities limited options in the domestic sphere. The reader comes away with a sense of how resistant events are to even the most vital forms of charismatic energy.

■

Even as he pondered the sterility of power, Bobby was unable to tear himself away.

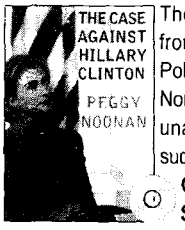
■

Robert Kennedy was, it turns out, keenly aware of the limits he confronted. When he visited undernourished children in the Mississippi Delta in 1967, he returned with a deep sense of the futility of politics. To the wife of a staffer Bobby exclaimed, "You don't know what I saw! I have done nothing in my life! Everything I have done was a waste! Everything I have done was worthless!" Yet even in the depths of despair after his brother's murder, Kennedy seems never to have more than trifled with the idea of leaving politics, and less than a year after Dallas he ran successfully for a New York Senate seat. Even as he pondered the sterility of power—the gilded impotence of office—Bobby was unable to tear himself away.

So many portraits of Robert Kennedy, while calling attention to his personal flaws, manage somehow to affirm the Kennedys' faith in the transcendent nobility of politics, their belief that public service was, as their hero Lord Tweedsmuir declared, "the greatest and most honorable adventure." Thomas comes closer to the Tolstoyan view that power is a narcotic for the vain, the opium of the beautiful people, and his book quietly subverts the idea that the Kennedys came anywhere close to mastering the chaotic forces of mid-20th-century history.

Kennedy helped fight the war against Marxian socialism during one phase of his career even as he questioned American liberalism's embrace of the milder socialism of the welfare state in a later phase. Thomas, however, does not credit Kennedy with either a coherent view of history or an original philosophy of reform. Kennedy did "not sound a clarion call" to reform the welfare state, Thomas argues, and his thinking contained "a good deal of 1960s liberal boilerplate." Still, one suspects there was more than boilerplate at the heart of Kennedy's criticisms of a New Deal approach that had outlived its usefulness. His own experience of federal impotence in the face of certain problems may have been precisely what convinced him that individuals and communities needed to do some of the hard work of solving problems on their own, and made him look for new ways to involve private enterprise in the effort to revitalize the inner cities. As Kennedy told an Indiana audience in 1968, "We can't have the federal government in here telling people what's good for them."

The sadness in the sun-strained eyes—in part the play-acting of a man who knew how to beguile ingenuous journalists—may also have been the outward manifestation of a deeper paradox: Kennedy found himself obliged to act as a garlanded torchbearer for a liberalism he knew to be flawed and impractical. It may be that his greatest achievement lay in the way he inspired the highest liberal hopes at the same time he sought to define the limits of what Washington can do. **NR**



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Fast Enough for You?

DAVID GELERNTER

Telecosm: How Infinite Bandwidth Will Revolutionize Our World, by George Gilder (Free Press, 351 pp., $26)

THE Internet is a topic that tends to bring out the fruitcake in people, but George Gilder is a formidable man; his books are cultural events. In *Telecosm* he focuses his compelling critical intelligence like a megawatt death-ray on the present and future of data networks. The result: heat and light, fire, sizzle, and flash, fireworks, explosions, and a book so good it actually rollicks. Over the last decade hundreds of books have investigated this fast-changing landscape—which underlies the future of the Internet, the web, and computers in general, of phones and TV and communication and culture; Gilder's is one of two or three that are indispensable.

Art and literary critics used to be (to speak Gilderesquely) smart interface cables that helped artists and laymen connect, so ideas could flow. They did not merely explain, popularize, or report; they advanced theories, championed causes, and moved the field. Gilder is in this sense a technology critic—one of the best. Unlike so many technology writers, however, he is not under the impression that technology is the whole world, or that the Internet will solve all of our problems. "People will continue to suffer and die, continue to sin and pay, continue to waste time and wealth," he acknowledges—the only gloomy sentence in the book, and a sign that the author maintains his perspective and dominates his material instead of allowing it (as so many technology writers do) to dominate him.

Mr. Gelernter is chief scientist at Mirror Worlds Technologies in New Haven and professor of computer science at Yale. He is author most recently of *The Empty Computer* and *Swan House*, a novella.

"Today," Gilder writes, "the ascendant technology is optics and the canonical abundance is bandwidth." As Gilder uses the word, "bandwidth" means data-carrying capacity, in bits per second. Data used to move fast *within* a computer, but *between* computers they shambled sloppily through crowded old-fashioned metal wires. Nowadays, glass is replacing metal; data rocket through glass fibers at the speed of light, moving faster between computers than inside them. Furthermore, new techniques make glass fibers more effective. They allow many messages to occupy one fiber simultaneously, at different frequencies—as if blue, indigo, violet, and many other color trains were all streaking down the same narrow subway tube at once. There are powerful new wireless technologies too, for the many places glass fiber can't reach. Gilder believes that the companies that are designing and building these new-style communication channels will dominate the technology future.

■

Ultimately the web itself is an obsolete image. The real future of communications is oceanic.

■

Telecosm's message is this: A quantitative change in data communications is leading to a qualitative change. "As more and more data sluiced across the globe by the week, the solution became more and more obvious," he writes: "an all-optical regime." There is no such thing as "infinite bandwidth," but Gilder believes that bandwidth will be so copious and cheap, it will seem infinite.

The best thing about the book is the way Gilder tells the story. It reads like a dispatch from the front: terse, strong, fast. Gilder is consistently in command of the complex facts, varied personalities, and his own prose. "Hicks ignored ray theory, easy enough to do since he hardly knew it." "Ironically, this policy of economizing on spectrum eventually led to using it all up." Sentences like these keep the narrative moving through the toughest terrain, and Gilder feeds himself into the story just enough to be interesting. His "misleading mnemonic" to help readers remember the seven layers of the official OSI network protocol is the most attractive moment in the book: a complex technical topic, Gilder admits, but it's important and "you should learn it." This seems like a small point but is in fact enormous. The author doesn't preach pompously from the technology heights; his goal is to help you up, to where you can see it all for yourself.

Even his mistakes are interesting. What does the emerging super-fast, super-capacious global network mean? That the network is now primary and the computer secondary? That your desktop computer will become a mere stepladder for reaching up into the global kitchen cupboard of the World Wide Web where all the interesting stuff is stored? That's what Gilder thinks—that "almost overnight, the CPU and its software have become peripheral; the network central." But he is wrong, as his own argument demonstrates.

In the emerging new Internet, signals move at the speed of light. With data going as fast as they possibly can, he writes, "the nemesis will be delay." In the technology world Gilder hopes for, each computer has the whole world at its fingertips; modern computer processors already spend most of their time waiting for data to show up. Say you're in New York and you need data from London: The data can't move any faster than light-speed—heartbreakingly slow from the processor's point of view. If your goal is to grab data from the web as casually as you do from local memory, the only solution (as Gilder explains) is to scatter copies of popular webpages all over the globe. Some of Gilder's favorite new companies are doing exactly that. If a copy of that London webpage has been stashed in Passaic, it can reach you that much faster.

This makes perfect sense, but Gilder forgets to notice that if we are talking about the *real* future and not merely the next few years, his argument only confirms the kingship of desktop computers. Gilder forecasts *lots* of copies of popular webpages, *all over*. And he notes that the cost of data storage has been falling even faster than the cost of computer power. But for once his imagination fails him. He reports on one scheme that

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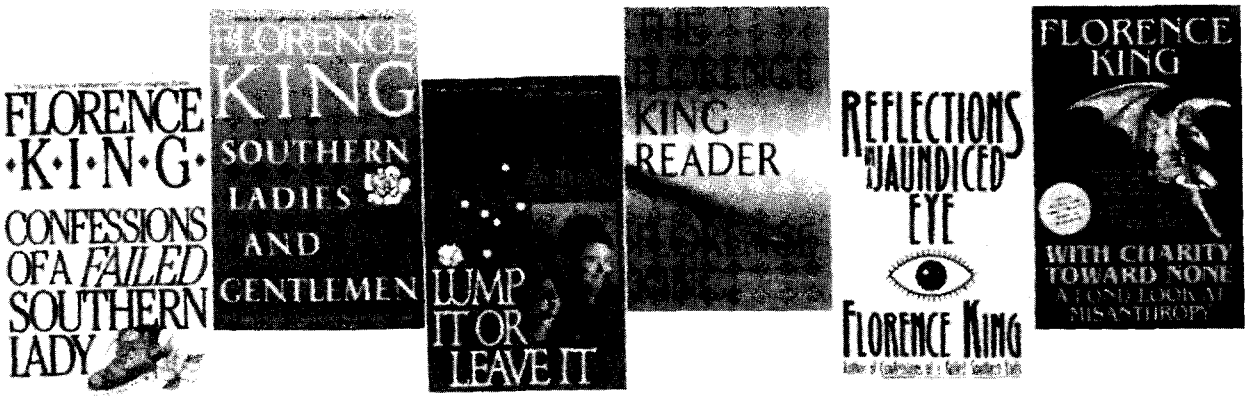
ALL THE KING'S BOOKS



She's America's Misanthrope. She's the Queen of Spleen. She's Florence King. Now Get This Curmudgeon's Classic Books—Direct from *National Review.*

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Southern Ladies and Gentlemen *The* guide to the ways and means of Southern culture. King wields her terrible swift stiletto to slice through the kudzu of Dixie manners and archetypes, including the Southern Woman, the Self-Rejuvenating Virgin, and the Good Ole Boy. "This is the best book ever written about the South....And on top of that it's delectably funny." *–Chattanooga Times* **$10.95/quality paperback.**

Lump It or Leave It King gives no quarter in these acid-laced reflections on American tomfoolery. From the joys of menopause to the hazards of fame, from college professors ("incapable of earning a living with either their minds or their hands") and the U.S. government ("the crude leading the crud") to that favorite of subjects, the South ("if at first you don't secede, try, try, again"), there are few blockheads or brainless trends left standing after Miss Anthrope has her way with them. "The scent of sulpher and brimstone wafts off the page....venom on a par with Dorothy Parker's literary bite." *–Chicago Sun-Times* **$9.95/quality paperback.**

The Florence King Reader This wallop-packing, 200-proof best-of will leave literary livers cirrhotic as punch-drunk readers beg for another round. From her biting essays and *NR* columns to her icon-smashing reviews and book selections (including a chapter from her long-lost historical novel, *The Barbarian Princess*), this King-size collection is a must for aficionados and neophytes. "One of the few contemporary American essayists of sufficient pungency and wit to be almost always worth reading." *– Washington Post* **$13.95/quality paperback.**

Reflections in a Jaundiced Eye King administers industrial-strength smelling salts to rouse any spirit that's been overcome by the smog of "caring 'n' compassion." This collection of brilliant essays dishes out curmudgeon justice by exalting the likes of Good King Herod and Spinsterhood while abasing the culturally malignant (including "Democrazy" and the "Cult of Helpism"). "To say that Florence King doesn't suffer fools gladly is an understatement akin to suggesting that Fred Astaire could maneuver quite nicely on the dance floor." *– People* **$8.95/quality paperback.**

With Charity Toward None: A Fond Look at Misanthropy America's unreconstructed people-hater gleefully separates the weak from the chaffing in this masterpiece on *la vie misanthrope* ranging from Timon of Athens to Ty Cobb. Zip open the body bags of King's victims and you'll find faux misanthropes (Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Andy Rooney), closet misanthropes (Richard Nixon), and a slew of humanitarian rabble. "The only trouble with this book is that its covers are too close together." *–New York Times* **$9.95/quality paperback.**

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"entails making as many as ten thousand copies" of popular webpages. Ten thousand is many? Let's be serious: If we are talking *many* copies, all over the world, *close* to their users—closer—more—closer!—more!—stop: You've reached the desktop. Ultimately the websites you care about most will be stored in your own computer. The network will be the back-office operation that keeps everything up to date.

In larger terms, Gilder has fallen for the Dorothy Mistake. The web *is* fabulous and inspiring; it is the greatest invention since the shopping mall—and yet there is no place like home. Ultimately people care most about their *own* information: their own photos, scrapbooks, e-mails, and bills, notes and files, bank balances and warranty cards, health records, diary pages, address books, voice-mail messages and love letters. Managing each user's personal information will become digital technology's most important job. And in a world where powerful computers with huge storage capacity are so cheap they will be given away with Cracker Jacks and children will be disappointed to get them ("Not another 5,000 tetrahertz *computer!* Wanna trade for your fire truck?"), your personal data will mainly be stored on your own personal computer. No other outcome makes sense. Personal computers are too cheap and powerful not to dominate the cyberworld of the future. The emerging "telecosm" will change them but not dethrone them.

Ultimately the web itself is an obsolete image, suggesting sticky strands full of trapped bugs or an antique rail system with computers like stations and datatrains chugging back and forth. The real future of communications is oceanic. People don't care about computers, they care about information and will deal with it directly, in the form of flashing throngs of cyberbodies moving gracefully through a cyber-continuum.

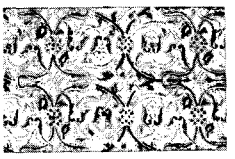
But now I am preaching *my* sermon, and Gilder is right to preach no man's but his own. George Gilder loves a law—he ends the book with twenty of his favorites, tendered like the dessert tray of a master pastry chef—so here is a new one in his honor: Any book about technology by George Gilder is guaranteed to be usually right, sometimes wrong, always well informed, and never (even for one paragraph) boring. My respect for the book transcends technical arguments. *Telecosm* is one of the best technology books I have ever read. **NR**

The Book Breaker

JOHN J. MILLER

The Island of Lost Maps: A True Story of Cartographic Crime, by Miles Harvey (Random House, 405 pp., $24.95)

On a basement wall at the University of Washington's Kenneth S. Allen Library in Seattle hangs a line from John Muir: "Handle a book as a bee does a flower, extract its sweetness but do not damage it." Nobody can say for sure whether Gilbert Bland read these words on his visit there in 1995, when he plunked down a phony ID and made a beeline for the rare-manuscript division. If he did, he paid them no heed: Bland requested a 17th-century book called *Ogilby's America* and sliced out four of its maps with a razor blade. He hid them under his shirt and walked out. The book was reshelved. There were no witnesses.



A few months later, a graduate student at the Peabody Library in Baltimore looked up from her work and saw Bland flipping through the pages of a musty volume. Something about him aroused her suspicion. Before long, she was certain that he was what bookhounds call a "slasher"—someone who cuts out illustrations from old tomes. She informed library officials, and that led to a low-speed chase around the 178-foot-tall Washington Monument in Baltimore's Mount Vernon neighborhood. Eventually Bland was cornered by the library's security guards. On his person they found four 200-year-old maps.

The story might have ended there, as a minor crime briefly noted in the local newspapers. Bland offered to pay cash on the spot for his release. The library accepted, leery of bad publicity and taking the advice of cops who thought Bland was an amateur crook who would make bail and skip town anyway. The two sides settled on a book-repair bill of $700, and Bland was on his way. But he made a fatal mistake—he accidentally left behind notes detailing his travels to libraries around the country, as well as his extraordinary hit list. Soon the FBI was involved, tracking down a criminal Miles Harvey dubs "the Al Capone of cartography, the greatest American map thief in history."

In *The Island of Lost Maps*, Harvey describes the odd case of Gilbert Bland, a man guilty of committing the closest thing to rape that a library can experience, dozens of times over. Bland would identify his quarry—maps in old books—far in advance, often over the Internet. Then he would plan trips to some of the best collections in the United States and Canada, pilfer a handful of maps at each stop, and sell them for thousands of dollars to collectors who weren't particularly concerned about provenance. Bland managed it all with astonishing ease—until his blunder in Baltimore.

Harvey tells a kind of detective story, working backward from Bland's apprehension and relating how authorities discovered the magnitude of his offenses. He performs plenty of gumshoe journalism himself on a subject who refused all overtures from his unauthorized biographer. Yet *The Island of Lost Maps* is more than a tale of true crime. There's a rule in the antique-map business that sometimes the parts of a book are worth more than their sum—i.e., the value of its maps, torn out and sold separately, exceeds the value of keeping them bound in one volume. This leads to a practice called "book breaking," and it understandably horrifies librarians and other purists.

In a way, *The Island of Lost Maps* is itself a book that cries out for breaking. The story of Bland is interesting, but Harvey's asides are engrossing. He discusses everything from library security (almost an oxymoron) to the psychology of map collecting (aficionados supposedly tend to come from broken families or ones that move around a lot)—all with a flair for page-turning prose.

The most intriguing parts of the book

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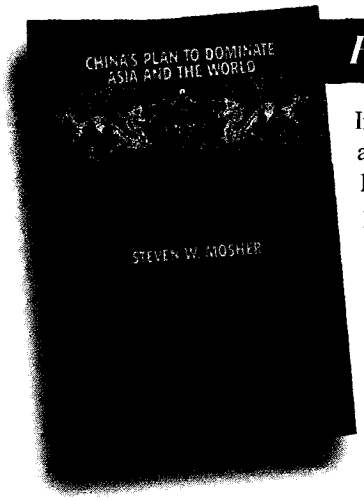
Get serious.



Hegemon by Steven W. Mosher

In ***Hegemon***, Steven W. Mosher shows how the quest for domination has been something like an art form in Chinese statecraft, an enduring feature on the country's mysterious face that is often hidden from the West. In his hands, Chinese history and culture opens a window onto Beijing's plans for expansion and conquest.

As timely as today's headlines about Chinese efforts to influence U.S. elections and steal U.S. nuclear secrets, ***Hegemon*** is a wakeup call to those dreaming of a "strategic partnership." It is also a masterful work of scholarship that reinforces Steven Mosher's reputation as one of our most thoughtful and provocative China watchers.

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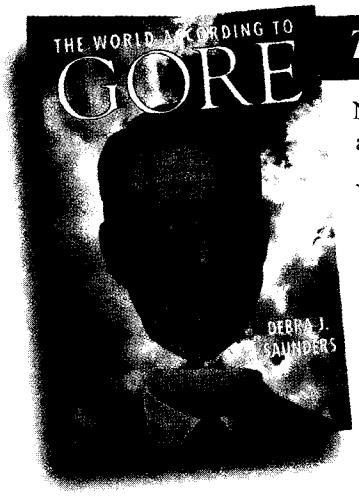

The World According to Gore by Debra J. Saunders

No writer takes Al Gore more seriously than nationally syndicated columnist Debra J. Saunders. In a guided tour of Goredom, Saunders follows the curves and switch-backs of Gore's intellectual journey—from Global Warming foe to wheeler-dealer at global environmental conferences; from pro-life to pro-choice; from someone who chopped and hoed it to the scourge of tobacco; from pro-NRA to anti-gun; from Mr. Clean to No Controlling Legal Authority; from theology school to the Buddhist Temple.

In ***The World According to Gore***, Saunders has taken Gore apart, put him back together again, and provided the reader with an insight into the politician he is and the president he would be.

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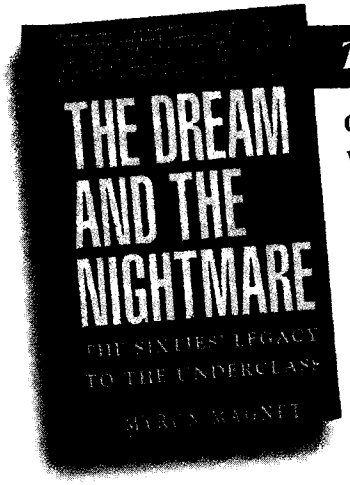

The Dream and The Nightmare by Myron Magnet

On January 5, 2000, the editors of the *Wall Street Journal* asked Governor George Bush what was the most important book he'd ever read, aside from the Bible.

Here's what Bush said:
"***The Dream and the Nightmare*** by Myron Magnet crystallized for me the impact the failed culture of the Sixties had on our values and society. It helped create dependency on government, undermined family, and eroded values which had stood the test of time and which are critical if we want a decent and hopeful tomorrow for every single American."

In a front page article on June 12, 2000, the New York Times referred to ***The Dream and the Nightmare*** book as one of the "first building blocks of the 'compassionate conservative' platform."

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relate a history of map crime. Gilbert Bland, in his own way, is part of a tradition. The book he ransacked in Seattle, for instance, is itself the product of map theft. John Ogilby, who was once England's royal cosmographer, based his map of Virginia on one that had been drawn up by another mapmaker. And that map, in turn, was identical to one that's even older, which itself may have been based on yet another cartographer's handiwork. The duplication is like software piracy circa 1670.

Modern mapmakers often prevent plagiarism by deliberately burying insignificant but telling errors in their work. One technique involves "trap streets"—mapping tiny cul-de-sacs that don't exist in suburban developments that do.

That may work nowadays, but map larceny was a major concern of the European powers during the Age of Exploration. Each one guarded its maps like gold. Portugal, for instance, didn't want competing nations to know how to sail around the Cape of Good Hope and on to India. Ferdinand Magellan himself stole trade secrets from Portugal for Spain, and Harvey argues that Magellan might not have located the strait that now bears his name without this information. What goes around comes around: Francis Drake captured Spanish charts in 1579 that may have encouraged him to head west from South America and circle the globe, rather than turn back on the warships in pursuit of him.

At times, Harvey can become a bit too precious, such as when he tells how Bland ran a South Florida map store in a strip mall called The Gardens—and proceeds to discuss for several pages where some cartographers used to place the Garden of Eden on their maps. At other points, he gratuitously thrusts himself into the book: "With each passing month, it seemed that I was searching less for an actual person named Gilbert Bland than for some dark and unexplored part of my own existence." Please, let's leave that place labeled terra incognita.

Yet *The Island of Lost Books* is a fascinating work—a successful cross between *The Professor and the Madman* by Simon Winchester and *The Orchid Thief* by Susan Orlean. (Both these authors, incidentally, warmly endorse the Harvey book in jacket blurbs.) There may be more definitive books on maps—a revised edition of *The Mapmakers*, by John Noble Wilford, is just out from Knopf—but perhaps none is so much fun. **NR**

■ **FILM** ■

Beginnings and Endings

JOHN SIMON

BERTRAND TAVERNIER is the most enterprising, various, humane, and sensitive filmmaker in France today—or, more simply put, the finest. Starting with *The Clockmaker*, the now-59-year-old director has turned out every kind of film. Some may remember him best for the thriller *The Judge and the Assassin*, others for the historical *Let the Feast Begin*, many for the family saga *A Sunday in the Country* or the antiwar *Life and Nothing But*. Still others for the jazz film *Round Midnight*, shot partly in New York. There are several other films just as good, and now comes his 19th feature, the masterly ***It All Starts Today***.

This is a film about a kindergarten somewhere in the north of France. The actual one used is in Anzin, a suburb of Valenciennes. It is in the heart of what was once coal-mining country; Zola's *Germinal* takes place nearby. Always poor, these folk—with the closing of the mines and widespread unemployment—are now at rock bottom. The kindergarten teachers try to keep the minds and spirits of the tots going, despite a lack of money, hygiene, and even food in most of the homes they come from.

Tavernier's daughter, Tiffany, and her husband, Dominique Sampiero, collaborated on the script with the director. Sampiero has taught in just such schools for years, even though he is a novelist with twelve books to his credit. The film's protagonist, Daniel Lefebvre, is freely modeled on him, and incorporates numerous characters and incidents from his teaching career. What inspired the film was a particular recollection of a young single mother he reprimanded for falling behind on the 30-francs' ($4.50) monthly payment for tiny treats for the children. Thirty francs, she replied, was what she kept herself and her children alive with each month on stale crackers dipped in milk.

Such stories accumulated from Sampiero's memories. There was the kid who would not rat on the "uncle" (really his mother's lover) who beat him savagely; the student whose loving mother collapsed drunk in the schoolyard; another mother, unable to pay the electric bill, whose family was living in darkness for months; the parents who could not face getting out of bed and shepherding their boy to and from school; the kids who did not know what a trade is, and so on and on.

Daniel, head of the school, copes prodigiously. But he has other problems as well. Valeria, with whom he lives, is a sculptress *cum* waitress, with a child of her own. The boy resents not being told who his (worthless) father is, and takes it out on Daniel. Valeria would like to be married, but Daniel is reluctant. Their story alone could make up a whole movie.

■

Bertrand Tavernier keeps more stories going in two hours than a tabloid has articles.

■

Then there is Daniel's aged father, unwilling to move from the house in which he lived as a miner, and a problem for his wife. That Daniel unremuneratively teaches tots, instead of going into business like his brother, torments the old man. And then he has a stroke. In all this there is a movie, too.

And then the stories of all those unemployed fathers, desperate mothers, and deprived kids. Yet this film is far from being solidly gloomy; it is also full of smiles—in the interaction among teachers and pupils, teachers and teachers, diverse social workers, a mayor, a school inspector, a policeman, and others. Daniel's skirmishes with the child-support agency, the mayor, the whole bureaucracy, are often horribly

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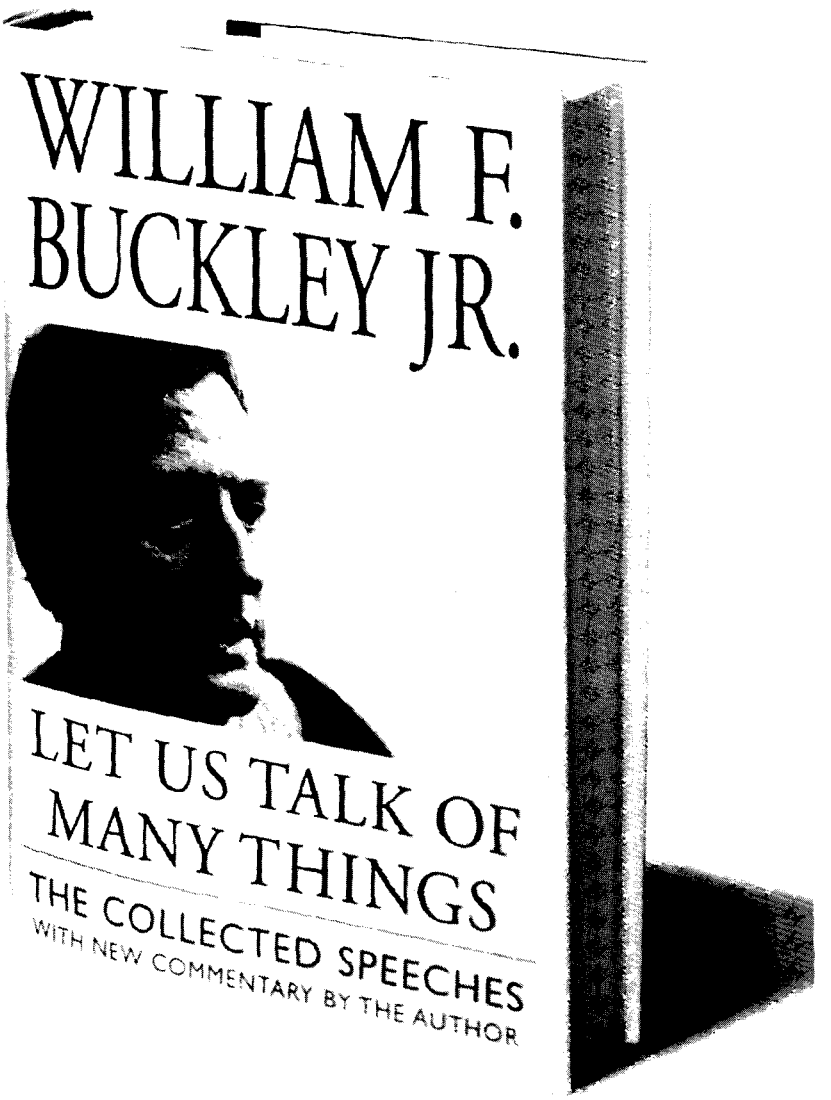

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ludicrous, and the way lack of money can stimulate ingenuity is frequently charming.

There are other threads. Daniel's (really Dominique's) prose poems weave their way through the film, beautifully cosmic yet also specific. Tavernier and his gifted cinematographer, Alain Choquart, work in stark cityscapes as well as severely comely landscapes. And always the faces of the children, mostly the 33 pupils in a class of the Anzin kindergarten, whose parents, reduced to watching American television, have absurdly named them William or Kevin or Kelly, or even, in the case of a pair of twins, Starsky and Hutch. Yet when Daniel and the kids sing French nursery songs together, God is in His heaven.

There are other memorable characters: Samia, a novice social worker, who becomes Daniel's staunchest ally, notably in getting the children medical treatment. Or Mme Delacourt, the most senior teacher, who exudes a wonderfully melancholy tenacity. Or the overextended Communist mayor, or the maid who becomes a surrogate mother to young and old.

Daniel, with tough love, unsentimental empathy, and heroic indignation, is at the center of unremitting onslaughts, drama lurking everywhere. But there are also moments of relaxation, lovemaking, shared meals, dancing, and sometimes humorous quarrels. Quite a bit is improvised, but so skillfully that it never becomes, as so often in movies, embarrassingly obvious. And almost no one, not even the child-support bureaucrats who hang up on Daniel, is treated as a villain.

The wonder is how Tavernier keeps more stories going in under two hours than a tabloid has articles, how he manages to connect them smoothly without losing the narrative thread or the audience's involvement. The camera rushes around quite a lot, yet does not induce dizziness; chaos is kept in a firm directorial hand.

Philippe Torreton of the Comédie Française, these days Tavernier's favorite leading man, has a face and body language that convey Daniel's fundamental innocence and experience-hardened practicality to lovably pigheaded perfection. He is splendidly supported by Maria Pitaresi as Valeria, and everybody else, including local amateurs pungent in their bit parts. But this is a film that does not conform to American expectations, and may be short-lived on our screens. If you can possibly catch *It All Starts Today*, do so today. Tomorrow may be too late.

■ A sad disappointment is ***Madadayo***, the great Akira Kurosawa's 30th and last film, which he made at age 83 as his own epitaph, five years before his death in 1998. Though written by himself, it is based on a novel derived from a true story. We are in 1943, Japan is beginning to lose the war, and Professor Uchida, a beloved university German teacher, decides to retire and write books. He has a devoted wife, and his loving students, four of them in particular, try to make his modest circumstances pleasanter.

When his house is destroyed in an air raid, Uchida and his wife make do in a cramped hut. Eventually, the students build him a dream house, complete with doughnut-shaped pond in which the fish can swim uninterruptedly. When his beloved alley cat disappears, the students make frantic efforts to retrieve it. And they keep coming to visit him, though he would prefer being left alone. Every year on his birthday, they throw him a banquet, during which they ritually ask, "Mahda-kai?" (Are you ready to go hence?) to which he answers, "Madadayo" (Not yet). The years go by and Uchida falls ill at one of these banquets, to which by now students bring children and grandchildren. Rushed home, he has a symbolic dream about a favorite childhood game.

The film is enormously static, and its trivial events fail to acquire universal stature. One gets a sense neither of the great teacher nor of the successful writer, only of the quirky eccentric. Uchida's not-very-profound remarks are received as sublime philosophy, his feeble jokes elicit bursts of laughter and lengthy applause. Even the actors, the leading one included, are less than winning, though Kyoko Kagawa is touching as the wife. It is a film that suffers from a sort of arterial sclerosis, and however much I treasure Kurosawa, there were few of its 134 minutes I could not have easily dispensed with. **NR**

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■ MUSIC ■

Catch the Rave

JAY NORDLINGER

NO ONE attracts hoopla like singers, over whom critics and music-lovers tend to go a little nuts. Pianists, violinists, and conductors all have their day, but it is the singers who give the world fever. Sometimes the excitement is entirely justified; other times, less so. At the moment, there is an astonishing number of young or youngish singers who are creating waves of enthusiasm. It pays to look in on a few of them, to see what all the fuss is about.

Countertenors have been in vogue lately (you failed to notice?), and leading the pack is David Daniels, a 34-year-old South Carolinian. Unknown only a few years ago, he is a full-fledged superstar—the first in his vocal range to be so. Season before last, Daniels sang the part of Sesto in Handel's *Giulio Cesare* at the Metropolitan Opera. In a cast studded with worthies, he stood out. Particularly riveting was the (sublime) duet that ends Act I, which Daniels sang with the mezzo-soprano Stephanie Blythe. It was one of those moments that make time stop. Never have I heard an opera house so quiet, so rapt.

Handel, of course, is bread and butter for a countertenor, and Daniels has duly come out with a collection of arias from that composer, on the Virgin Veritas label. He begins with "Ombra mai fù" from *Serse*, a sturdy test for any singer—almost an anthem for those who traffic in the Baroque. Daniels handles it superbly. He is both tight and expansive; that is, he adheres strictly to the score while allowing for bloom where appropriate. This is a most unusual voice, up in a stratum we seldom hear. Once we get over the shock of the sound, we realize that Daniels is a very fine singer, with an extraordinary instrument; once this fact has settled in, we go on to realize that he is also a very fine musician—a smart, elegant Handelian. That is even more.

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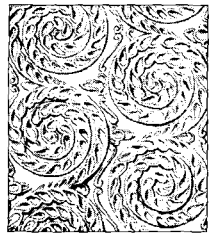
As the disc progresses, Daniels exhibits any number of admirable traits. His phrasing is lovely, his intonation secure, his dynamics shrewd. He has just the right amount of breath coming through his sound—it is not too lush, not too dry or "pipey" (a countertenor can sound like a recorder, as Daniels, indeed, in off moments, does). In the quicker arias, he is crisp and sharp; something like "Venti, turbini" (from *Rinaldo*), he snaps off. In the more plangent arias—"Dove sei" (*Rodelinda*), for example—he is relatively plain, matter-of-fact, eschewing sentimentality or opulence.



Of the hundreds and hundreds of Handel compilations that have been made, this must be counted among the more satisfying ones. We have no choice: The Daniels bandwagon has to be hopped on.

Coming down a step or two, to the range of tenor proper, we find Ian Bostridge, a 35-year-old Englishman who is fairly the toast of the critics. A doctor of history from Oxford, Bostridge is known for his literary and cerebral approach to the song repertory. In the last year or so, he has been the subject of some of the most rapturous reviews I have ever seen. His rise from young don, fooling around with singing for his friends and colleagues, to titan of the vocal world has been—to use a word that is predictably applied to such phenoms—meteoric.

Celebrated primarily as an exponent of German lieder, Bostridge has just gone native with an anthology of English songs (available from that faithful purveyor of English music, EMI Classics). Not often do tenors work as song recitalists. In the annals of history, we have had Fritz Wunderlich, and Nicolai Gedda, and . . . but the trail quickly runs cold. Plácido Domingo—at the age of 59, in the autumn of a glorious career, when he is venturing ever deeper into Wagner—made his New York recital debut only last January. He might have delayed it even longer.

Bostridge is persuasive in the repertory of his home soil—Stanford, Warlock, Finzi, Quilter, and the boys. His singing is direct, intimate, and classically English (a quality recognized when heard). It is also rather polite, just a bit too careful, a little too self-conscious. The instrument is smallish and delicate, though not wispy or inconsequential. It has a hint of the chorister in it, but that is part of its nature, and of its appeal. Bostridge is somewhat reminiscent of an older tenor from his country, the splendid Ian Partridge. Ian Bostridge and Ian Partridge should be confused for years to come—a condition that ought to flatter them both.

At his best, Bostridge is natural, alert, and winning. Yet his technique is far from perfect. He strains at the top, a problem that grows worse when the music is *forte*. Nor does he have any real lower register to speak of. Then too, his intonation can be inexact; he tends to flat on certain vowels, when the note is sustained. Moreover, he is occasionally—just occasionally—dull, interpretively. The Britten-arranged "Salley Gardens," for example, should be an absolute heartbreaker; it is one of the most beguiling, haunting items in the entire English songbook. Here, however, it lies pretty much inert on the page, deprived of its power.

Nevertheless, Bostridge is an artist to acclaim, just as the critics say. And for those of us who would like to hear this sterling repertory sung by a tenor other than the deeply problematic Peter Pears (rest his soul)—he is a relief as well.

From the Czech Republic (as we have had to learn to call it) comes Magdalena Kozena, a 27-year-old mezzo-soprano. She too salutes her flag, with a collection of Dvorak, Janacek, and Martinu. This literature is rarely performed, not because it lacks riches, but because most singers lack the language. Sopranos from around the world enjoy learning the big aria from Dvorak's *Rusalka*, but there it usually ends. Kozena, though, can go whole hog. She obviously loves this music, is proud of it, and knows that it deserves a wider hearing. Her label, Deutsche Grammophon, must have figured the album would sell.

It should. And it is. This is a brilliant, revelatory collection, sung with great understanding and conviction. Kozena boasts a bright, lovely mezzo, with some steel in it. The upper register is thrilling: juicy, alive, assured. Technically, Kozena seems able to do anything required. But above all, she is musical—naturally, dependably so. This is the type of singer who must even cough musically. Her album could put the Czech song repertory on the map. Especially pleasing are the Martinu entries, one of which is a lullaby from 1932, rather startlingly composed to "Negro poetry." (It begins, "One night in Tennessee, a little black boy cried . . .").

Impressive as this disc is, Kozena's Bach collection, recorded for Archiv four years ago, when the singer was but a lass, is even more remarkable. I could provide a long list of particulars, but suffice it to say that practically everything about it is right—a huge achievement.

Finally, stay east of the Danube, and with mezzos, to consider Vesselina Kasarova. Thirty-four years old, she is a Bulgarian, and thus an heiress to a grand and long vocal tradition. She has already had an active recording career, proving her mettle in Mozart, Rossini, and French *mélodies*. Now she has laid out her first disc of lieder, confirming that she is truly a complete singer.

This album (on BMG Classics) consists of very familiar songs—Schubert, Schumann, and Brahms—but we listen with patience and pleasure to Kasarova. The voice is arresting: dark, sensuous, flexible, individualistic, and gorgeous. It recalls somewhat the sound of the immortal British contralto Kathleen Ferrier (than which higher praise can hardly be given). Kasarova's singing is characterful and bold. Some might prefer more restraint, a little more introspection, but it is refreshing to hear a singer so unafraid of these small masterpieces. She digs into them eagerly, almost lustily; the composers would approve. In Brahms's "Von ewiger liebe"—a bit of an anthem for low female voices—she demonstrates great nobility, in the tradition of her exalted predecessors: Ferrier, Marian Anderson, Christa Ludwig, Janet Baker, and Marilyn Horne. This is the company Kasarova may well wind up keeping.

So, these are four of the rising generation, and there are actually more where they came from. As I never tire of saying, we are in a golden age of singing (whatever our woes in other areas), and the critics and concertgoers seem to recognize it—writing themselves silly, yelling themselves hoarse. Just as they should. **NR**

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■ CITY DESK ■

Where it Listeth

RICHARD BROOKHISER

I LIVE in a neighborhood with lots of university housing, so a walk down the street on a weekend night passes many a Stygian den disgorging kids, the smell of beer, and the detonations that are called music. How do they get there? I know how the kids get there: They want to puke and copulate; what being could enjoy greater felicity? But how do the musicians get there?

Flipping through one of the weekly downtown papers, looking for the cartoons, I found the answer: two pages of ads from musicians who are looking for work and each other. In *Far from the Madding Crowd*, Gabriel Oak had to appear in the market holding his crook when he needed a job tending sheep. Now he would fax in four lines.

Services lead off the listings. "BEAUTIFUL WOMEN NEEDED For Busy Escort Service." Must have been a collapse in the groupie market. "VIDEO DIRECTOR SEEKS BAND for new videos. I provide equipment, you provide budget." But who will provide the film editor whose attention-deficit disorder will make the video suitable for MTV?

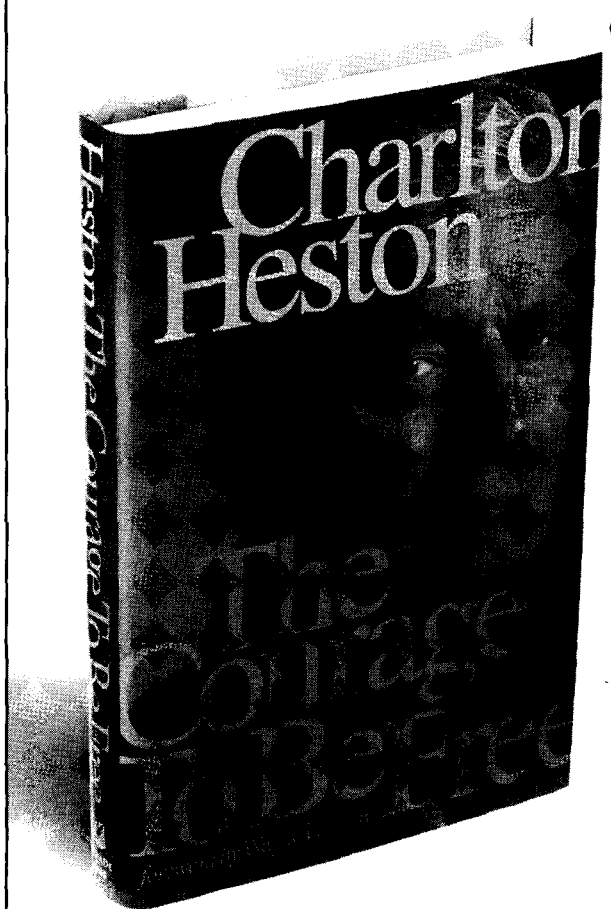
The ads for musicians themselves are quite specific, sometimes combative. "No Riot Grrl BS," warns one. "No Jewel ripoffs," says another (maybe those two advertisers should trade their rejects). Some ads tell you more than you want to know. "We're like bubble gum that explodes all over your face." I'll pass on that one. ". . . noisy, over the top rock band—like a gang." That one too. "TRANSVESTITE MUZICIAN VOX into pagan rites, orgiastic rituals, prophetic ecstasy, heavy beats & hemp. ISO compatriots and producer." Read on, Sir/Madam: "UNUSUAL SIDESHOW ACTS and Musical Oddities wntd for NYC shows . . ."

■

A hit of the doo-wop era urged teen listeners to 'Get a Job.' So does the music business.

■

Often a winning hopefulness breaks through. "All decent musicians call me to start new band," begins one ad modestly, then defines "decent musicians" as "Folk Rock originals (like Dylan)." So if you happen to be on a par with one of the most influential singer/songwriters of the last 35 years, and you're just twiddling your thumbs, call now. Even more heartening than the hope is the ideal-



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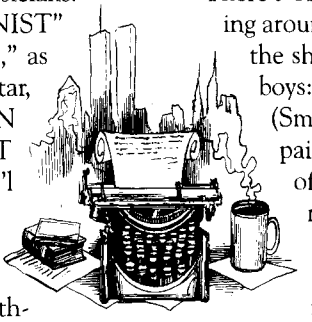
ism. "INEXPERIENCED YOUNG SINGER sks experience & evolution w/others into truth in sound. Be smart, emotional, dedicated/unable to survive w/out your music." That is how Socrates described the pursuit of knowledge. But, alas, virtue attracts predators. "SONGWRITER w/Excellent Nashville connections seeks collaborator." If your Nashville connections are so excellent, Mr. Songwriter, why are you seeking collaborators in the *Weekly Ragpaper*? Another songwriter seeks "FEMALE LD VOCALIST" to accompany him on "public access TV show. Great exposure." Yes, Channel 77, the observed of all observers.

The listings are eclectic enough to include a few non-rock musicians. "OBOE/ENGLISH HORNIST" says he can play "All styles," as well as saxophone, bass, guitar, and "other insts." "CUBAN PROF PERCUSSIONIST . . . Reliable, old timer/prof'l image." Didn't I see this man in *The Buena Vista Social Club*? The phone number in this ad has a northern Jersey area code, probably representing Hoboken, where Elián González had almost as many well-wishers as he did in Miami.



Popular music, especially rock, feeds off two myths—the myth of raw youth, and the myth of the *Volk*. Every rock musician's biography begins with some kid thrashing around in a garage. But rock music is an industrial process. At the pinnacle sit the modern-day equivalents of the top-hatted, walrus-mustached millionaires on Monopoly cards: sleek trisexual culture warriors like David Geffen. These ads troll for the nuts, the bolts, and the drones. A hit of the doo-wop era urged teen listeners to "Get a Job." So does the music business.

The other supposed wellspring of popular music is poor America. In the hollows of Appalachia, where they take up serpents, and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; or deep in the Delta, bent over cotton and tobacco plants; or on some Spartan prison farm, among the gamblers who cut each other in knife fights—this is where Pan resides. Modern mythology has added an urban soundscape, the projects echoing with the fusillades of drug dealers. But they're still dirt- (or concrete-) poor, and most welfare cases are only three generations away from the farm anyway. This mythology looks back to the field recordings of Alan Lomax and finds gaudy expression in the *Anthology of American Folk Music*, a 1952 compilation from old 78s by a hunchbacked Greenwich Village drug addict named Harry Smith, which was reissued a few years ago by Smithsonian Folkways Recordings. "Here," fume the fevered liner notes, "is a mystical body of the republic . . . a declaration of a weird but clearly recognizable America within the America . . . of institutional majoritarian power."

There's only one problem with rooting around among the hillbillies and the sharecroppers and the homeboys: A lot of the music is lousy (Smith, more than Lomax). It is painful to listen through some of the yokel blundering and reflect that at the same time that it was being recorded, Louis Armstrong was playing his arias in Chicago, and George Gershwin distilling late-Romantic chromaticism into three-minute sonnets in New York.

The spirit may blow anywhere, but once it alights, it has to be shaped, produced, and marketed. That happens in cities, because that's where the audiences who buy it, the equipment that records it, and the colleagues who refine and criticize it are. "Truth in sound," as YOUNG SINGER knows, comes from "experience & evolution w/others." **NR**

■ BOOKS IN BRIEF ■

It's My Party: A Republican's Messy Love Affair with the GOP, by Peter Robinson (Warner, 249 pp., $24.95)

IT is just possible that, come next January, the GOP will control the presidency and both Houses of Congress for the first time in five decades. This prospect leads Peter Robinson, host of the PBS television program *Uncommon Knowledge*, to ask a very timely question: "Who *are* these people?"

It is a question Robinson, a former Reagan speechwriter ("Mr. Gorbachev, tear down this wall!"), tackles with aplomb. After outlining the party's beginnings in the abolitionist movement and the Federalist and Whig parties, he explores the nooks and crannies of today's GOP. He discusses the Clinton impeachment with Henry Hyde, the GOP Congress with Newt Gingrich, the "gender gap" with pollster Kellyanne Fitzpatrick, the Republican executive temperament with Jersey City mayor Bret Schundler, urban politics with Rudy Giuliani, and Hispanic outreach with Ron Unz. He travels to the region most hospitable to Republicans—the South—and to the town most hostile to them—Hollywood (where he is advised by, among others, NR's Rob Long).

Most startling to Robinson is the degree to which party allegiance is a family matter: Statistically speaking, if your folks are Republicans, chances are you'll become one too, and stay that way. Of course, ideas also play a role, and Robinson interviews several converts, each a representative of a demographic group that historically has voted Democratic—Michael Medved (an Orthodox Jew), Justin Adams (a black graduate student), and David Brady (a Catholic political scientist).

Robinson views his party with a combination of affection and exasperation that many readers will find familiar. "Never underestimate the ability of Republicans to miss an opportunity," he advises at one point. Still, he finds much to commend in the GOP—first and foremost the principles that unite all the Republicans he spoke with: "A belief in individual responsibility. The conviction that any government that absorbs a full one-fifth of the goods and services its citizens produce is too big and too intrusive. The desire to see American military might remain unassailable . . . An eagerness to bring market forces to bear on social problems . . . [A] respect for the Judeo-Christian moral tradition."

That list goes a long way toward answering the question Robinson poses earlier. We are left thinking that, for all the party's flaws, any institution that holds to principles like these—and commands the allegiance of an observer as charming and insightful as Peter Robinson—can't be all bad.

—CRISTOPHER RAPP

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WILLIAM F. BUCKLEY JR.

The Secret Story Behind the Debates

NEW YORK, SEPTEMBER 5

THE back-and-forth on the forensic encounters runs into layer after layer of contention, some of it embarrassing.

1) Are we exploring the question of character? That seems to be the primary objective, these days, of Candidate Bush. On Day One, Bush sponsored a heavy-handed TV political commercial in which the voice-over lady professes her concern over the unreliability of Candidate Gore, right to the point of threatening to give up television. On Day Two, Bush strikes again. He says Gore said yes, now he says no. Gore said he would debate Bush "any time, any place," and now Gore is refusing to accept a revised schedule, featuring a proposed prime-time (NBC) version of Tim Russert's *Meet the Press* and a prime-time (CNN) version of *Larry King Live*.

The trouble with using the Gore refusal as the gravamen of Gore's untrustworthiness is that a personal concern is toweringly self-evident. It is that Candidate Bush does not look forward to the Presidential Commission formula for these encounters, and is plausibly suspect of palavering his way around that point by suggesting other, more congenial forums that would reduce the size of the audience.

But, 2) Gore has run into a different order of problems. He says that Bush's proposed schedule would have the effect of cutting millions of voters out of the loop. Why?

Here is the explanation. If a network gives up a commercial hour in order to broadcast the debate, that network is undergoing a sacrifice.

How's that? Because (let's use round figures) 20 million people aren't going to forfeit an hour with football or 60 *Minutes* in order to tune in on the presidential debate. If NBC shows the debate, featuring moderator Tim Russert, CBS and ABC aren't going to collapse their schedules to defer to a competitor.

But why can't we assume that the viewing public will tune in to the debate, forcing the hand of network management?

Because they won't; and this is an aspect of the controversy Mr. Gore is not willing to parse, because he doesn't want to get out there and say: The only way we can get the high figure of listeners to tune in is if we lock them into doing so by giving them no alternatives on the dial. He would not want to say that because it would suggest less than the kind of faith he wants to exhibit, faith in the curiosity and duty-mindedness of the American voting public.

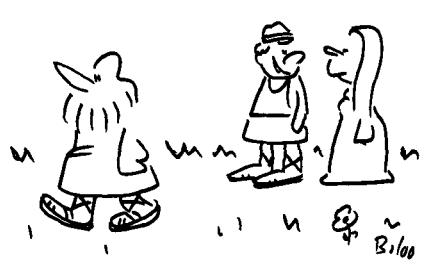
3) In 1992, in a Clinton–Bush debate, the three networks combined (plus those auxiliaries that also scheduled the debate) got 92 million viewers, which gives an idea of the potential audience (lock everybody in a room at night with one television set, and they'll listen to people who want to be president!). Contenders at these debates are moved either by reasoning that they will outperform the opposition, or that they don't want to face the music of declining to debate.

Prowess as a debater is an achievement of Al Gore for reasons earned and unearned. He is fast on his feet, resourceful, and surgical. These skills are the product of intellect, wit, and experience.

But his primary asset is the organic formulation of the public question. On Labor Day he told his audiences that it all comes down to: The Democrats want to spend the surplus on health and education, the Republicans want to spend it on a gift for rich people.

This is not a formulation a Republican can't ever hope to win—Reagan and Bush and Nixon won. But the odds tend to stack up on the side of the contender who wants "free" drugs for the elderly, rather than a return of surplus taxation to the "rich." Gore has a stake in the size of the audience that is there to be persuaded to act, next November, in behalf of goodness and charity, rather than more money for the Rockefeller class.

Bush can't beg out, but he has the additional problem of an unsuccessful preparation of the potential voter for the implications of the Gore / Democratic / socialist polarizations. The undecided voter hasn't been sensitized to the Republican / conservative position on the imprudencies of welfarism, and Gov. Bush reasonably calculates that he can't reliably take on this postgraduate training in a couple of hours of network TV.



"Aristotle is my favorite instructor—he always gives true-or-false tests."

Under the Bed Of Welfare

NEW YORK, SEPTEMBER 1

HAVE you ever died? No, you will say; but that doesn't excuse your indifference to the cost of dying, most notably, funeral expenses. These are significant, even unbearable episodes in economic life. They are, for one thing, all but unavoidable, because even cremation is hardly free. Add to the mechanical costs of embalming, the purchase of a coffin, the cost of interment, the poignant factor, and you get some idea of the total cost. You think there is a heavy markup of drug prices? Check the out-of-pocket expenses of tending to a corpse, from the moment it becomes that, to the recital of the final prayer over the grave, compared with the bill presented to the bereaved. What is the argument against a Federal Interment Relief Act?

We tread our way softly, quietly, to the root positions in the current national political question about drugs, and who is to pay for them. To say the government is to pay for them is the easiest way to say: "Somebody else is going to pay for them." But right away, economic sleuthing slows you down. One percent of American taxpayers pay 33 percent of income taxes, and 25 percent pay 82 percent of the taxes. Yes. But does that mean that an extra $25 billion or so of spending per year will be borne by the good old 25 percent who are now paying the 82 percent?

The answer is no, unless one assumes that tax rates will increase on the middle

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class. But Al Gore isn't asking for that, and neither is George W. Bush. Therefore, a $25 billion medical subvention is going to be financed by anticipated surpluses, which translates into a decision not to return those surpluses to the taxpayers. And if the surpluses didn't materialize, then what?

Round and round we go. The cost of prescription drugs is rising at about 12 percent per year; the overall cost of health care, at about 5 percent. By the hard rules of mathematics, these rates have suffocating implications. Twelve percent compounded over 12 years comes to 319 percent. Add to this progression the subversive effect of drugs: They prolong life! The more you take, the longer you live, the more drugs you need.

So who is going to pay for it all?

Imagine a debate.

Moderator: We intend to ask the candidates, What do you plan to do about prescription drugs? The rules of engagement are—you are not allowed to say that the "government" will pay for them because, of course, the government has no resources. Vice President Gore, we will begin with you.

Gore: The American people are endowed by our Founding Fathers with life, liberty, and the right to pursue happiness. There is no way in which happiness can be pursued if you can't afford the basic medium of happiness, which is health. I talked the other day to a woman in East Hartford, Connecticut. She is a 65-year-old retired clerical worker who has no insurance coverage for drugs. Her monthly drug bill for her diabetic ailment is $506. Her monthly Social Security check is: $496. Somebody has to pick up her medical expenses.

Moderator: Governor Bush, who is that somebody?

Bush: Well, the best way to put that is: the lady's neighbor.

Moderator: How will the neighbor pay?

Bush: Got to be through taxation, there's no other way.

Gore: I wouldn't put it quite that way.

Bush: No you wouldn't, because your scam is to make it sound as though the diabetes pills are going to materialize, just like that, for your lady in East Hartford, at no palpable cost to anybody, let alone her next-door neighbor, who, when you put the problem to her in this particular way, is less eager to vote for Free Drugs—less eager to vote for you—than she was before.

Moderator: Are you saying, Governor Bush, that you're against helping the diabetic lady in East Hartford?

Bush: I'm in favor of encouraging any relief plans for the specially needy, designed and financed by the states with reference to the community's own priorities and resources. There's a family tradition, where I come from, against voodoo approaches to national problems. You take too much voodoo, you pop off, and who is expected to pay for that expense? Uncle Sam?

Joe Lieberman's Challenge

NEW YORK, AUGUST 29

'WHAT we have to have from Bush," the congressman said over the telephone, "is an espousal of a controversial policy recommendation—and stick to it and hew down hard." That makes a lot of sense, to this non-congressman, and the lead is surely there; sitting duck.

We have a great irony at center stage in America, the narrative of which is: Joseph Lieberman believes not only his faith, but believes that "there must be a place for faith in America's public life." And this wasn't just Sunday-talk. Joe Lieberman is a United States senator and is running for vice president of the United States. Now add this: He is not—a Christian! So what do you say about a *Jewish* figure who, if language means anything at all, is saying to an audience mostly non-Jewish (90 percent of Americans are Christian) that religion needs to take a more assertive position in public life?

Well, what you do if you are the Anti-Defamation League is you slit your throat. Here is the granddaddy of tolerance organizations, specifically organized to expose and protest anti-Jewish thinking and scheming, and what does it run into? A public figure calling for an expanded role for religion in public life—but the S.O.B. is a Jew! If he were Pat Robertson or one of those people, the tocsin might have sounded alerting the community at large to the inchoate anti-Jewish intimations of this call for religious affirmation. What do we do now?

One has to assume that the ADL's Abraham Foxman picked up the telephone and said grittily, *Get me Ira Glasser.* Mr. Glasser is the eloquent and ubiquitous boss of the American Civil Liberties Union, among whose ambitions is to reduce the practice of religion to private conversations between you and your minister. What would the ACLU recommend, at this turn of events? Mr. Glasser can be depended on to harness the entire weight of the ACLU to a rebuke of Sen. Lieberman, and indeed this is what happened. The ADL fired Shot One on Monday: "We do not think that religion belongs in the political campaign and the political arena," Mr. Foxman said. "There's nothing wrong with somebody professing their faith and going to church or synagogue, but this is almost hawking it."

Well, that is certainly true. To have a candidate for vice president affirm the need for religion in public life is certainly to hawk religion, using almost identically the language used by George Washington and Abraham Lincoln and other—non-Jews. That the same sentiments should be composed and uttered by a Jewish candidate is a triumphant expression of genuine religious freedom.

So where does Candidate Bush come in?

Candidate Bush could take the occasion to expand his concern over judicial interventions. The news is very hot that in extensive recent findings in three suburban centers, black students who were given vouchers and attended non-public schools profited hugely—enduringly—from the relative benefits of discipline and increased expectations. Bush could, without fear that Candidate Lieberman would object to it, assert a national interest in the freedom of schools to sponsor non-denominational prayer.

What would Candidate Gore do, in such circumstances? Without any objection from the ADL, he could remove himself into a park or forest and pray privately for guidance. But when he emerged, he would need either to endorse Gov. Bush's call for public reproach of the Court, as Abraham Lincoln reproached it after *Dred Scott,* and President Roosevelt and successors after *Plessy* v. *Ferguson,* the separate-but-equal decision—or say that Candidate Lieberman was talking hot air when he spoke about the need to reintroduce faith in America's public life.

That would be a fine meeting of minds. And Gov. Bush could promise that, from the White House, he would consult Sen. Lieberman on means of implementing his devout recommendations.

—UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

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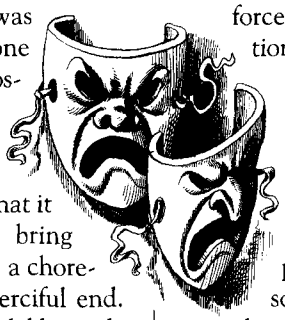
■ THE MISANTHROPE'S CORNER ■

FLORENCE KING

DAY ONE: Another load of cow flop, another Campaign Diary. My coverage of the Dems' convention got off to a bad start when I inadvertently missed Hillary's speech. I say inadvertently because it was Shark Week on the Discovery Channel and I didn't realize I wasn't watching her.

I switched back in time to see Bubba's interminable trek through the bowels of the convention center. Choreographed by Harry Thomason, it was widely interpreted as a "lone gladiator" entering the Colosseum for the last time, or Gary Cooper as Lou Gehrig heading stoically for the Yankees locker room, but what it actually suggested should bring Harry Thomason's career as a choreographer to a rapid and merciful end. Whether subconsciously or deliberately, this touted Friend of Bill was getting even for the ostracism he and his wife suffered after the travel office and haircut episodes of 1993. It requires the brain of a convention delegate to find anything heroic or flattering about this cinder-block hegira. To me it symbolized the instinctive dread of labyrinths that pervades mythology, or the universal nightmare in which we try to reach an unnamed something that keeps getting farther away. A Clintonized interpretation might be the condemned prisoner's last mile; specifically, the French lady-killer Landru marching to the guillotine. At the very least it suggested JFK's rake's progress through the subterranean passageways and boiler rooms of hotels he used for assignations.



DAY TWO: Now we know what happened to the Play-Doh the INS gave Elián González: It turned into supple, flexible, malleable, pokeable, pullable, stretchable Joe Lieberman, the conscience of the Senate. The potter was Maxine Waters, who could make even strong white men weak; give her five minutes alone with Louis XIV and she'd have him saying *L'état, c'est vous*. It was only to be expected that poor, eager, grateful Joe Lieberman developed spinal deliquescence at the first sign of her displeasure and reshaped himself into the *Little Affirmative-Action Engine That Could*. It was the greatest proof yet of the power Waters wields. She's a one-woman shadow government who can issue a call for racial "disturbances" anytime she doesn't get what she wants. If the convention had run a week longer into August she could have ordered her forces to mount a floor demonstration on St. Bartholomew's Day.

DAY THREE: If either of the Liebermans says "Only in America" one more time. . . . George Will beat me to the punch when he pointed out that England had a Jewish prime minister 132 years ago, so I am left with pointing out that England's first Jewish knighthood was bestowed on Sir Solomon Medina by William III in 1699, in gratitude for his financing of the wars won by the Duke of Marlborough. So far as is known, neither Sir Solomon, nor, later on, Baron Nathan Rothschild, screamed "Oh, my God! I don't believe it!" like a Lotto winner.

DAY FOUR: The Kiss. Polls and pundits are divided on whether it was planned or spontaneous, but the either-or restricts our understanding of what actually happened. Clearly it was both.

It started out scripted. The idea was for Gore to encircle Tipper's waist and for her to place her hands on his shoulders while they exchanged a quick, sweet peck. This they did, but then something happened, and I know what it was because I wrote the same scene countless times back when I was hacking out paperback Gothics.

The hero of a Gothic is always an emotionally warped squire whose rigidly arranged life is disrupted when he hires a plucky governess intent on uncovering the secret tragedy that has made him so cold. Nothing daunts this girl; she's game for anything—locked rooms, hidden passageways, bat-infested attics, whatever it takes to solve the riddle of his shrouded past and bring him out of his shell. As she draws closer and closer to the truth, he panics, feeling his defenses crumbling, and decides that sex is the only way to control her. His chance comes when he pulls her out of the abandoned well she has just fallen into. Since his arms are already around her, he suddenly yanks her against him and snarls, "Come here, you little fool!"

The Gore clinch was a classic Gothic kiss, a last-ditch attempt at self-preservation by an aloof man content in his aloofness, asserting that aloofness to the whole world by momentarily cutting off the air of the woman who never stops doing whatever it takes to bring him out of his shell.

Writing Gothics is as bad as watching conventions. I took a course in court transcribing, so I used to write them on the Stenotype machine when drunk and transcribe them when sober. "Come here, you little fool" in Stenotype is: KOPL HER RBGS U HREUTL TPAOL. (That's faster to take down than it looks.) If you want to bombard Gore campaign headquarters with this coded message, I am powerless to stop you.

Never let it be forgot that every silver lining has a cloud. A noticeably lowering presence at Bathos 2000 was 17-year-old Albert Gore III. It has since come out that he had been arrested for reckless driving and speeding (97 mph), but the look on his face betokened something more than just being grounded.

Nobody can sulk like a teenage boy. That kid was furious and nobody who remembers the '92 convention can blame him. That was the year Gore used him to flaunt his paternal sensitivity in a blubbering account of the boy's brush with death. Next came the '96 convention, where Gore used his sister's cancer to flaunt his fraternal sensitivity, and now at Bathos 2000 he was using the whole family to prove how loosey-goosey he is.

The whole family, that is, except his namesake. He was ostensibly left out of the show to punish him, but it could be that the Gores know he sees through the old man and is hellbent on sabotaging him—hence the merry chase he gave North Carolina's controlling legal authorities. **NR**

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